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**ÆTHELFLEAD** The woman who crushed the Vikings

# HISTORY

MAGAZINE

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## THE HORROR OF THE BLACK DEATH

How the medieval plague  
ripped families apart

**"Jane Seymour  
wasn't just a  
pasty-faced  
yes girl"**

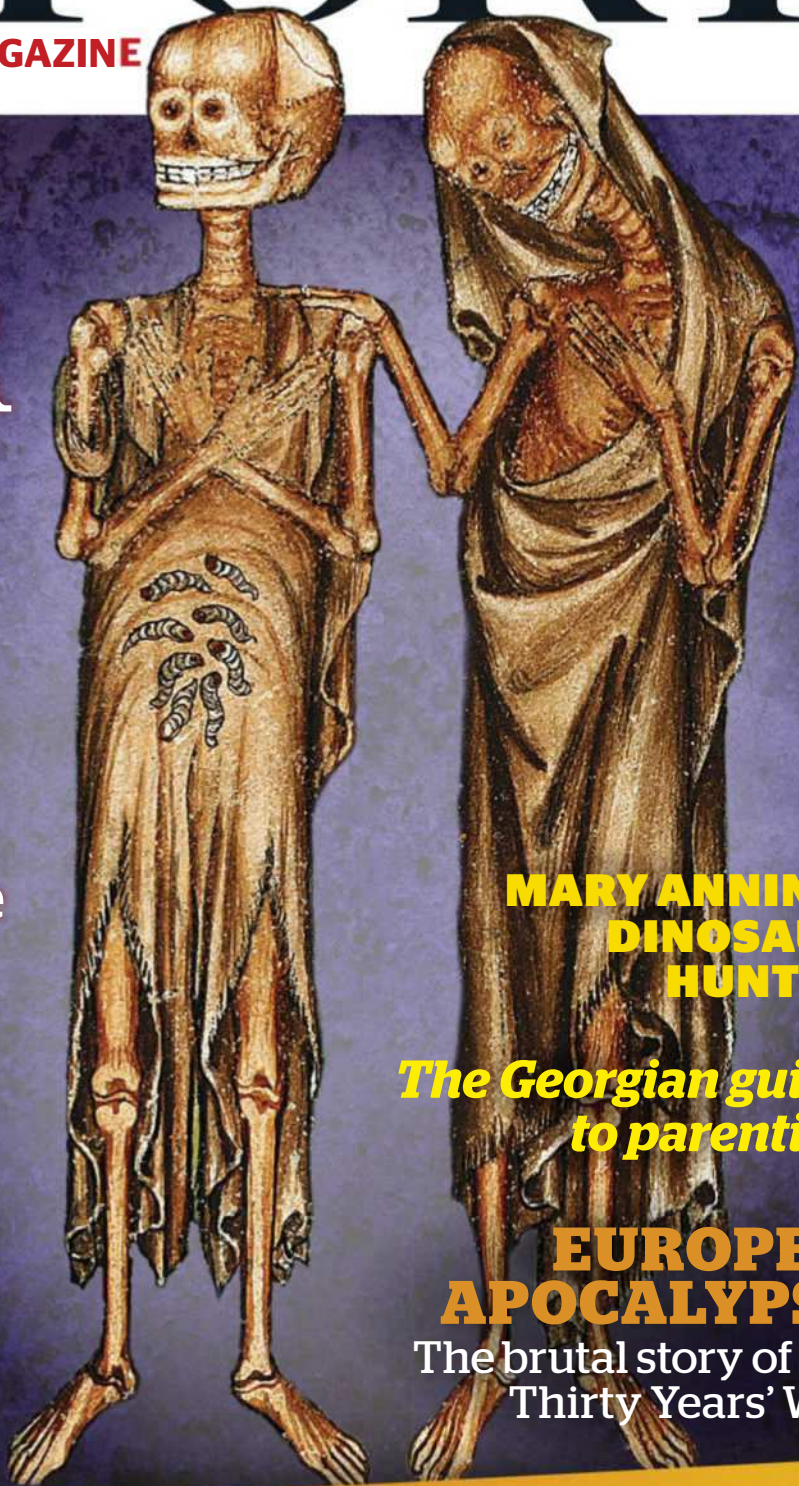
**Alison Weir** on Henry VIII's  
favourite queen

**PLUS**



## A bridge too far

**Antony Beevor** explains why Arnhem was doomed to fail



**MARY ANNING:  
DINOSAUR  
HUNTER**

***The Georgian guide  
to parenting***

**EUROPE'S  
APOCALYPSE**

The brutal story of the  
Thirty Years' War

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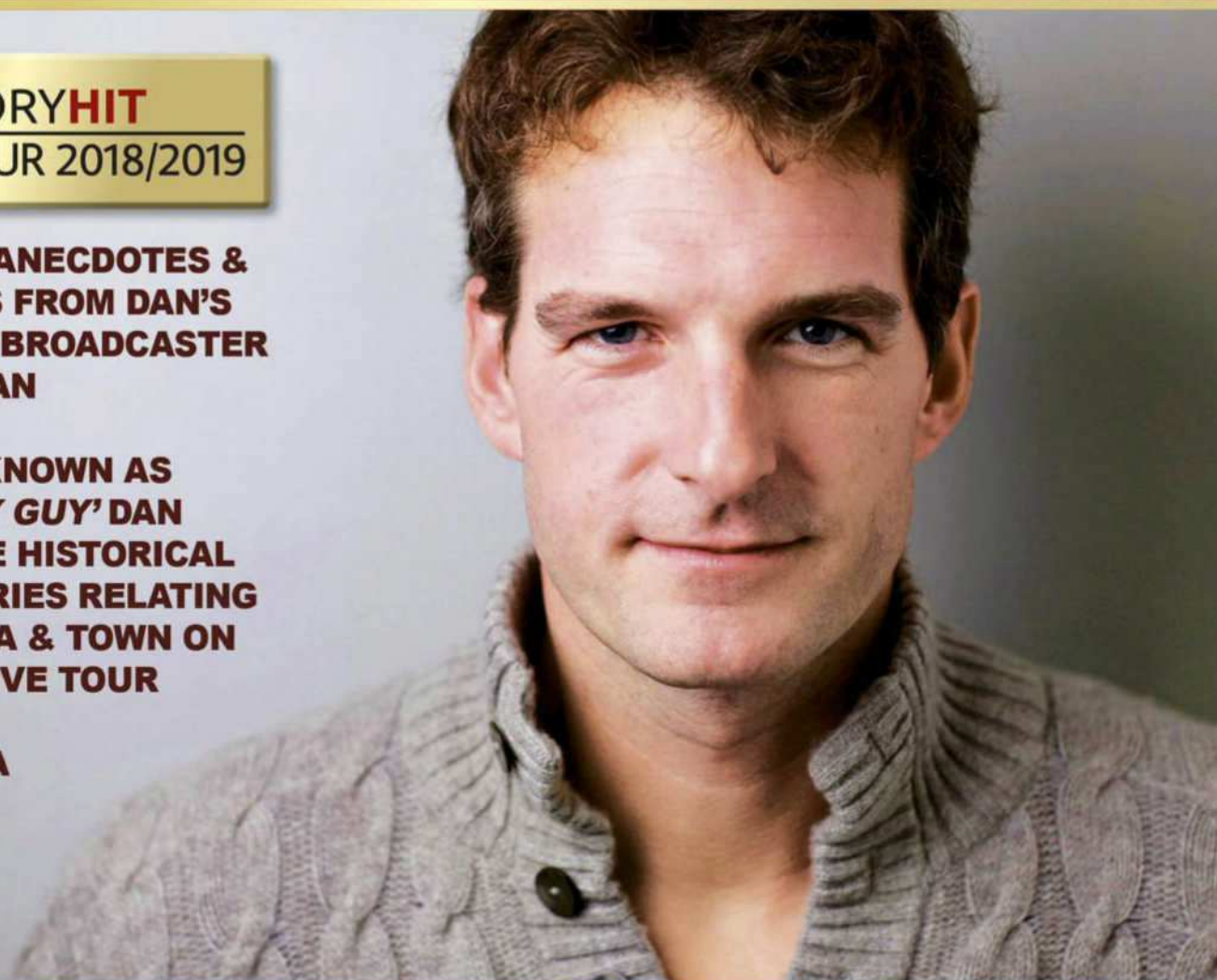


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JUNE 2018

# WELCOME

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“Killing around a third of the population of Europe, **the Black Death** was the most savage disaster the continent has ever faced. Even after 650 years, questions remain about the plague, with new theories continually surfacing about its origins and how it was spread. In this issue, however, we explore the consequences of the disease, and in particular a response that shocked even those who had already witnessed the **worst of the plague: abandonment**. On page 20, Samuel Cohn reveals how the Black Death tore families apart, and even saw doctors and priests running for the hills.

As we were completing this edition, news came through of the birth of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's third child. The royal couple are already well versed in parenting, but should they need any guidance from history, they might want to take a look at this month's article on **Georgian child-rearing**. On page 27, Elizabeth Foyster highlights some of the joys and challenges facing parents in the 18th century, some of which seem particularly alien, while others will be familiar to many of us in the 21st century.

Also in this issue, we reveal the line ups for our **History Weekends**. Turn to page 61 to discover some of the exciting names who will be appearing in York and Winchester, and to find out how to book tickets. Plus, on page 48, you can find out about our **new subscriber-only digital resource, The Library**, offering free access to several years of magazine content, with more exciting additions to come.



**Rob Attar**  
Editor

## THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



**Janina Ramirez**  
Warrior women have obsessed me for many years. I am delighted to be able to reassess one of Anglo Saxon England's finest fighting females: Aethelflaed, Lady of the Mercians.  
● *Janina delves into the fascinating life of a fearsome female warrior on page 44*



**Peter H Wilson**  
The Thirty Years' War, fought between 1618 and 1648, is often presented as Europe's great religious war. However, a closer look reveals a more complex situation and gives us a better understanding of why it proved so protracted and destructive.  
● *Peter shines a light on one of Europe's worst conflicts on page 50*



**Elizabeth Foyster**  
In Georgian Britain, there was plenty of parenting advice, much of it written by clergymen, teachers, midwives and physicians. There were new challenges, but also perennial ones as parents faced some of their most pleasurable and stressful life experiences.  
● *Elizabeth offers some tips to a new parent in Georgian times on page 27*

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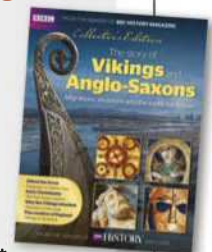
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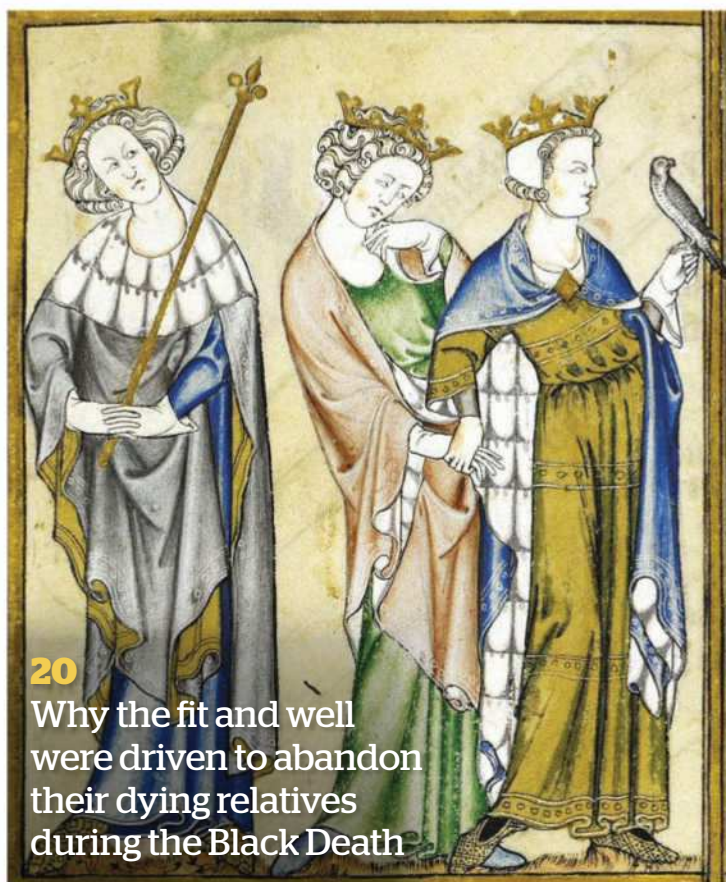


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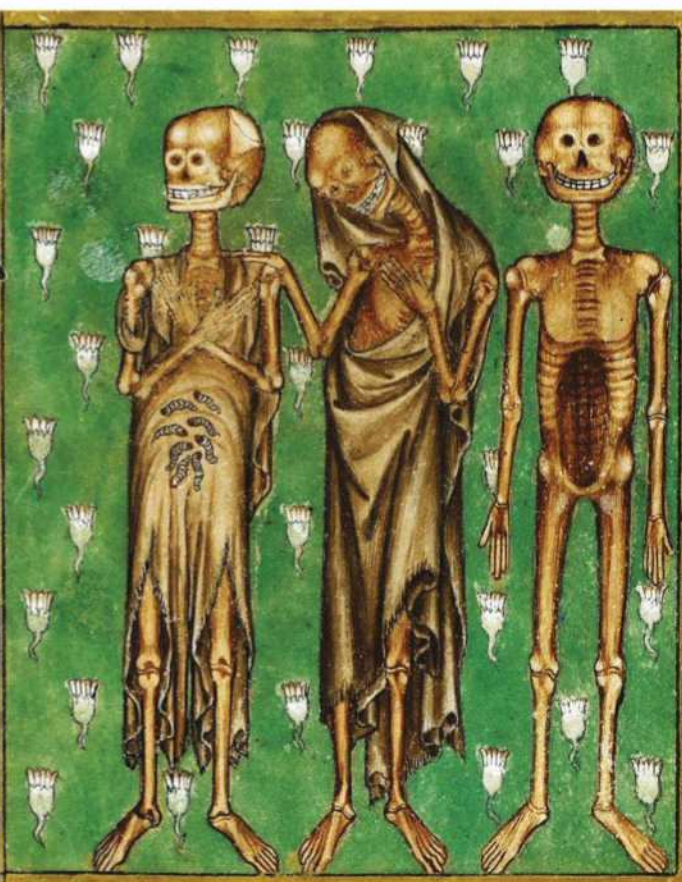
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How bad planning wrecked  
Operation Market Garden

**Dominic Sandbrook** highlights events that took place in **June** in history

# ANNIVERSARIES

**10 June 1190**

## Barbarossa meets a watery end

*One of medieval Europe's most powerful  
crusaders drowns, leaving his army in disarray*

**I**n the early months of 1190, terrible news swept Asia Minor. Three years after Saladin had recaptured Jerusalem, the crusaders were returning. This time their expedition would be led by one of the most powerful men in Christendom: the Holy Roman Emperor himself, the colossally experienced and accomplished German king Frederick Barbarossa. On 18 May, Frederick smashed the Seljuk Turks at the battle of Iconium. Jerusalem was in his sights. A titanic showdown with Saladin seemed only a matter of time.

But then fate made an extraordinary intervention. On 10 June, Frederick's army was just outside Silifke, in southern Turkey, and attempting to cross the river Saleph, when something went terribly wrong. Medieval chroniclers told different stories: some said the emperor

had decided to go for a dip to cool off on a sweltering day, but others said that he had been leading his troops across the ford when his horse slipped and threw him into the cold water. Some claimed that Frederick drowned, others that he died from a heart attack brought on by the shock.

In the days following his death, everything went wrong for the late emperor's army. His son, Frederick of Swabia, led them south, but they were ravaged by desertions and disease. In Antioch, Barbarossa's body was boiled and filleted to remove his bones. His flesh was buried in the cathedral church of St Peter. The army hung on to his bones, hoping to bury them in Jerusalem. But they never made it to the city, and the bones found their resting place in Tyre instead.



A manuscript depicts the death of Barbarossa in the choppy waters of the river Saleph. Without his experienced leadership, the emperor's army soon came unstuck

**27 June 1954**

## The football pitch becomes a battlefield

*Brazil and Hungary's World  
Cup quarter-final descends  
into an all-out brawl*

**T**he Wankdorf Stadium, Berne: 27 June 1954. As the rain pours down, the thousands of spectators can barely contain their excitement. Today's World Cup quarter-final sees Brazil's glamour boys play Hungary, pride of the communist bloc and unbeaten for the last four years. Everybody expects a feast of football.

What followed, however, was one of the most notorious matches in sporting history, known as the Battle of Berne. The result of the game was 4-2 to Hungary, but the real story was the violence, which made headlines around the world.

The trigger seems to have been Hungary's second-half penalty, which provoked a pitch invasion by Brazil's coaching staff, journalists and officials. For the next half-hour the match was a glorified brawl, which saw three players – Brazil's Nilton Santos and Humberto Tozzi and Hungary's József Bozsik – sent off for fighting. "Never in my life have I seen such cruel tackling, the cutting down of opponents as if with a scythe, followed by threatening attitudes and sly jabs when officialdom was engaged elsewhere," reported *The Times* correspondent.

At the final whistle, the Brazilians once again invaded the pitch, and the fighting in the dressing room was so intense that Hungary's manager needed four stitches in his face.

For the referee, Arthur Ellis from Halifax, the events that day were a terrible disappointment: "I thought it was going to be the greatest game I'd ever see. I was on top of the world," he said later. "Whether politics and religion had something to do with it I don't know, but they behaved like animals."

ALAMY/PA IMAGES

**Dominic Sandbrook** is a historian and presenter. His Radio 4 show on *The Real Summer of Love* is available at Archive on 4

BBC  
RADIO

4



Brazilian team captain José Carlos Bauer (in the number 6 shirt) attempts to calm tempers during the brawl between Brazilian and Hungarian players, in what became known as the Battle of Bern. Those involved “behaved like animals”, said referee Arthur Ellis

**19 June 1269**

The French king Louis IX announces that all **Jews will be fined 10 livres of silver if they appear in public** without a yellow badge.



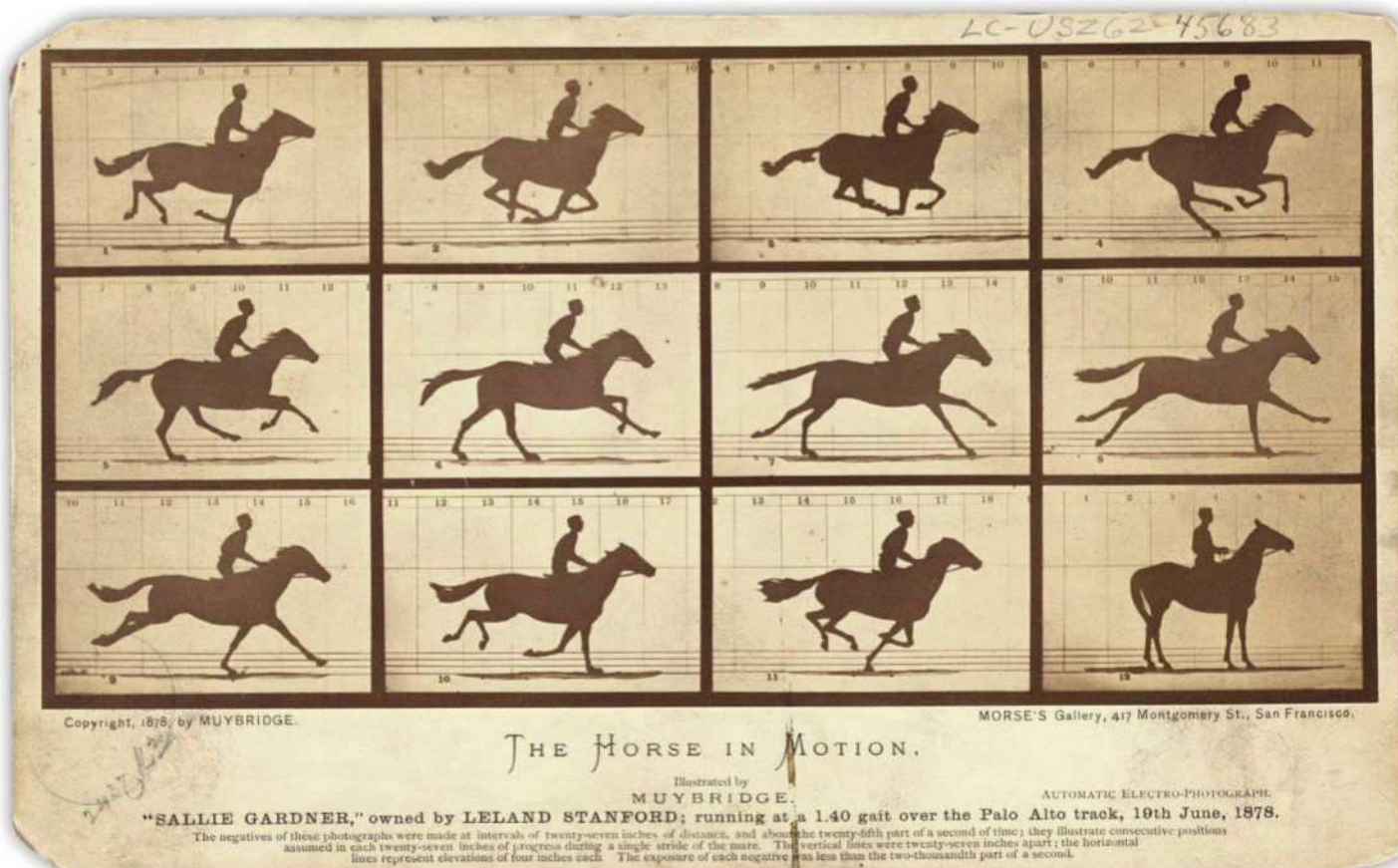
**10 June 1692**

In the colony of Massachusetts, the **first victim of the Salem witch trials**, Bridget Bishop, is hanged for witchcraft.



**17 June 1631**

When the Mughal **empress consort Mumtaz Mahal dies in childbirth**, her husband begins work on a spectacular mausoleum, known as the Taj Mahal.



**The Horse in Motion by Eadweard Muybridge.** He captured the images of galloping mare Sallie Gardner, using 12 cameras triggered by tripwires, in order to investigate whether all four of a horse's hooves left the ground at the same time

**15 June 1878**

## The world's first moving pictures are caught on camera

*Eadweard Muybridge's dynamic images of a galloping horse propel photography into a new age*

**E**adweard Muybridge led, by any standards, a very strange life. Born in Surrey in 1830, he emigrated to the United States, suffered brain damage in a Texas stagecoach accident and murdered a drama critic whom he had accused of sleeping with his wife, only to be acquitted on the grounds of justifiable homicide.

Yet in the middle of all this, Muybridge created what are often described as the

world's first moving pictures. In the late 1860s he had become well known for his stunning images of Yosemite Valley, and the former California governor Leland Stanford commissioned him to find out whether a horse's feet did – as some people claimed – leave the ground all at once when it was racing.

Muybridge duly began taking pictures, but the real breakthrough came on

15 June 1878 at Stanford's farm in Palo Alto, before an audience of invited journalists. Hoping to capture Stanford's mare Sallie Gardner at the gallop, Muybridge had stationed 12 cameras along the track, some 27 inches apart. The shutters were controlled by tripwires, which would be triggered as the horse passed.

Sallie duly set off, galloping at a planned speed of 36 miles per hour. The shutters clicked; the photos were taken. Muybridge developed the prints there and then. When the reporters examined them, they saw that all four of Sallie's feet had indeed left the ground. And when, two years later, Muybridge projected the pictures on to a big screen, it seemed as if Sallie was genuinely galloping before the audience's astonished eyes. In effect, he had created the world's first silent film.

30 June 1934

## Hitler purges the Nazi party

*The dictator tightens his grip on power through a spate of ruthless killings*

Ernst Röhm was asleep in his hotel in the lakeside town of Bad Wiessee when the fatal knock came. It was just after dawn on 30 June 1934, and the leaders of the *Sturm Abteilung*, or SA, paramilitaries had been relaxing at the Bavarian resort before their planned meeting with their party leader, Adolf Hitler. For months, tensions had been building within the Nazi hierarchy, not least between the SA and the army. Now Hitler and Röhm were going to sort all of these tensions out, although not quite in the way the latter was expecting.

When the SS men stormed in, Röhm was taken entirely by surprise. Hitler was there, too, and as Röhm gaped in horror, the Nazi leader ordered him taken away by two guards. Once the SA leadership had been rounded up, Hitler drove back to Munich. At the local party headquarters, he told a crowd that the SA had been planning a coup, the “worst treachery in



The front page of the *Daily Express* reports on the Night of the Long Knives. Ernst Röhm was shot by Hitler's supporters after refusing to commit suicide

world history”. It was time to root out the “undisciplined and disobedient characters and asocial or diseased elements” within their own ranks. The crowd howled their approval.

In the next three days, dozens, possibly hundreds of people were killed. The victims included not just the SA leadership, but old Nazi comrades who had fallen out with Hitler, senior figures in

the Catholic Centre Party and, most famously, Hitler's predecessor as Germany's chancellor, General Kurt von Schleicher. Röhm himself was shot after refusing to commit suicide. Now Hitler's power was unchecked. For as he boasted to the Reichstag, the Night of the Long Knives had confirmed his status as “the supreme judge of the German people”. ■

### COMMENT / Ian Kershaw

#### “The Night of the Long Knives made Hitler's power in the Nazi state complete”

By spring 1934 Adolf Hitler faced a major crisis. For months, the Stormtroopers, a massive paramilitary organisation over 4 million strong, had posed an increasing threat to Nazi rule. Their arrogant abuse of power made them unpopular with much of the public. But they also made enemies in high places – among the Nazi leadership including the SS, among the conservative elites, and not least among the leaders of the army.

The ambition of Ernst Röhm, head of the Stormtroopers, to subordinate the army to a people's militia under his control made a clash with the Wehrmacht leadership

inevitable. And Hitler could not afford to alienate the army.

However, he awaited the best moment to rid himself of the SA scourge. By June 1934 he could wait no longer. Amid fears of a possible coup by the SA or by conservative reactionaries with the ear of Reich president Paul von Hindenburg, backed by the army, Hitler acted – and with the utmost ruthlessness.

The Night of the Long Knives served as a warning to any further potential internal enemies. It also bound the grateful army to Hitler. It profited the SS, which had carried out most of the bloodletting, and

increased the power of its head, Heinrich Himmler. Ultimately, the Night of the Long Knives made Hitler's power in the Nazi state complete.



Ian Kershaw's books include *Hitler* (Penguin, 2010), *To Hell and Back: Europe, 1914-1949* (Allen Lane, 2015) and the forthcoming *Roller-Coaster: Europe 1950-2017* (Allen Lane)

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## EYE OPENER

### **Mystery of the severed mummy's head solved**

To whom did this 4,000-year-old severed mummy's head belong? That was the question puzzling Egyptologists after the head was found in a corner of a tomb in the ancient Egyptian necropolis of Deir el-Bersha. The tomb contains the remains of the ancient Egyptian governor Djehutynakht and his wife – and recent DNA analysis has revealed that the head belonged to Djehutynakht himself.

## 19TH-CENTURY CYCLING

*“Female cyclists were subjected to rocks, sticks and rude remarks, and denied entry to cafes and hotels”*

A research project at Goldsmiths, University of London has been investigating – and recreating – the clothing inventions of female cyclists in late 19th-century Britain.

**Dr Kat Jungnickel** (right), who led the project, explains more



Dr Kat Jungnickel cycles in a recreated version of the 1895 Bygrave Convertible Skirt

### What impact did the bicycle have on the lives of Victorian women?

In the late 19th century, middle and upper-class women – and men – enthusiastically took up this exciting new form of mobility. Prior to this, exercise was deemed unnecessary and even unhealthy for women, but little could stop women from cycling once they had experienced the unparalleled freedom promised by the bicycle. It enabled them to be in, and move through, public spaces in new ways – sometimes unchaperoned – at speed, at new times and in different places.

Women's cycling raised issues, though. A female body on a bicycle – how it moved and in what ways it was dressed – swiftly sparked a public debate about the broader role of women in society.

### How did society respond to female cyclists?

The growing popularity of sports and active lifestyles, particularly for women, helped catalyse changes in

fashions. Some women adopted ‘rational dress’ – broadly recognised as a looser corset (or no corset) and a form of bloomers in place of the skirt or shortened skirt. Rational dress was safer and more comfortable for cycling but this radical change in fashion was socially divisive. Rationally dressed cyclists could elicit a range of responses from all classes of society – from verbal abuse to physical assault. Many were subjected to rocks, sticks and rude remarks, and denied entry into cafes and hotels.

### How easy was it to cycle in long skirts?

Ordinary women's fashions were vastly incompatible with the moving machinery of the bicycle. Newspapers regularly published gruesome accounts of women dying or becoming disfigured in cycling crashes due to their skirts and petticoats becoming tangled in wheels and pedals.

### How did inventors respond to women cycling?

Convertible cycle wear is a key theme in the patents I've studied. Inventors aimed to create garments

that did two things: operate as a form of cycle wear while still “giving the appearance of an ordinary skirt”. Pulley systems, button and loop mechanisms and rings and cords were among the technologies concealed in the infrastructure of skirts to enable wearers to secretly switch from street wear to safe and comfortable cycle wear when needed.

There was clearly a market for such garments. The Bygrave Convertible Skirt – an 1895 design patented by Alice Bygrave – was sold all over the UK, in America and even made its way to Australia.

Sadly, we've been unable to find surviving examples of any of these costumes. But by following the detailed step-by-step instructions in their patents, we've created a collection of garments inspired by five convertible cycling costumes. These designs reveal women's ingenious responses – as inventors and designers – to social and physical restrictions, and the important roles women played in cycling cultures. **H**

**Kat Jungnickel** is senior lecturer in sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her book, *Bikes and Bloomers: Victorian Women Inventors and Their Extraordinary Cycle Wear*, has recently been published by Goldsmiths Press. For more on the project, visit [bikesandbloomers.com](http://bikesandbloomers.com)

Rosina Lane models a version of her sister-in-law Alice Bygrave's patented cycle wear



# £5,000

The amount paid at auction for a silver Anglo Saxon coin found in a field in Norfolk. The rare coin dates to the reign of Æthelstan, who ruled England from AD 925-39

## Which women do you think did most to shape the world?

For the past three years, we've asked readers to vote in our History Hot 100 poll, nominating the historical figure they are most interested in. But this year, we're changing the format and asking you to nominate the women you feel have had the most significant impact on history.

This year marks the centenary of one of the most important landmarks in modern British history: the 1918 Representation of the People Act, which gave some women the right to vote in parliamentary elections for the first time.

In honour of this milestone, we've launched a poll to discover the women you think have done most to shape the world around them. There are 100 women to choose from – nominated by 10 historians, who each selected 10 women they feel have done the most for their field of research – from science, technology and sport, to politics and literature. The women chosen by our historical panel lived all over the world, in a variety of historical periods. Our only stipulation was that they had to have died before 1 January 2018.

We've released the list of nominations and voting is now open. Visit [historyextra.com/100women](http://historyextra.com/100women) to select up to three women you feel deserve a chance to be crowned number one.

Voting closes at 23.59 (GMT) on 29 June 2018. We'll announce the results in a future issue of *BBC History Magazine*.



Who has made our list of 100 women who changed the world?

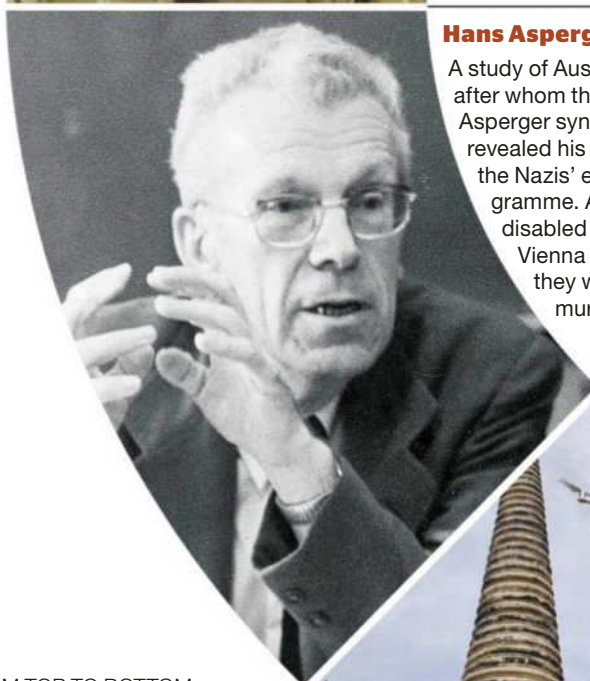
## HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of stories hitting the history headlines



### Knife used as prosthetic limb

A skeleton, which dates from the 6th to 8th century AD and was found in Italy in 1996, had a knife in place of a right hand, according to a study in the *Journal of Anthropological Sciences*. Analysis revealed he fixed the knife to his right arm – using a cap, leather straps and a buckle – with his teeth.



### Hans Asperger aided Nazi eugenics

A study of Austrian doctor Hans Asperger, after whom the developmental disorder Asperger syndrome is named, has revealed his active participation in the Nazis' eugenics programme. Asperger referred disabled children to a Vienna clinic where they were then murdered.

### Google maps historic sites

Google Arts and Culture has released high resolution, 3D scans of 26 historic sites in 18 countries, including Chichén Itzá in Mexico. Visit [artsandculture.google.com/project/cyark](http://artsandculture.google.com/project/cyark)

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

A selection of pieces from the so-called Harald Bluetooth treasure; a skeleton with a knife as a prosthetic arm; Hans Asperger, pictured in 1971; a drone hovers above Wat Phra Si Sanphet temple in Ayutthaya, Thailand



### Harald I treasure found in Germany

Treasure linked to Harald Bluetooth, the 10th-century king credited with uniting Denmark, has been unearthed in northern Germany. Discovered on the Baltic island of Rügen, the find includes braided necklaces, a Thor's hammer, brooches, rings and about 600 coins.



The historians' view...

## Why is Italian politics defined by divide and disillusionment?

Italy's recent general election saw anti-establishment parties riding the crest of a populist surge, and the rift between north and south growing ever wider. Two historians offer their views on a politically fractured nation

Compiled by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history

**“In the recent elections Italy's Five Star Movement have exploited a sense that the south of the country has been left behind in recent decades**

**PROFESSOR ANNA BULL**

**T**he 2018 elections in Italy have marked the emergence of a deep political fracture between the north and the south, epitomised by the decisive success of the centre-right coalition in northern regions, and the similarly decisive victory of the Five Star Movement (M5S) in southern ones. In Veneto, Lombardy, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Piedmont, the centre-right obtained well above 40 per cent of the vote, while the Five Star Movement matched that figure in all the southern regions.

The success of the M5S is perhaps the greatest novelty of these elections, exploiting a sense that the south has been left behind in recent decades – or, indeed, ever since the unification of Italy in the 19th century. While in the postwar period, the ‘Southern

Question’ became prominent, with successive governments seeking to industrialise this area, such objectives ground to a halt in the 1980s due to the mounting debt of the state-holding companies that had invested in the south, and the closure of many plants in the face of international competition.

Then the early 1990s saw the emergence of the ‘Northern Question’, with a new party – the Lega Nord – able to represent the needs of a large part of the northern electorate, particularly around taxation. Indeed, for the last 20-odd years, the Lega has shifted the balance of power in favour of the north – not least in terms of resources – forcing the other parties to appeal to that same part of the country. Now the 2018 elections mark a turning point, with the southern electorate casting their votes to differentiate their demands and needs from those of the north, in ways which can no longer be ignored.

Studying the data helps us to understand how the gap between the north and the south has grown in recent decades. If we look at poverty, 30 per cent of the southern population belongs to the poorest fifth, as opposed to 11.5 per cent in the north. The rate of employment is 66 per cent in the north but only 43 per cent in the south. Public investment in the south has decreased constantly since the 1970s. Similarly, investment in infrastructure decreased from 1990 to 2012 in the south, while in the years of the Berlusconi govern-

ments it increased in the centre-north.

In the M5S's successful campaigning in the south, the theme of renewal (especially moral and political renewal) has been the most prominent. The idea of economic modernisation is viewed with suspicion by this party, which has taken on board various anti-growth ideas. And the vote for the M5S in the south also indicated a turning back from old-style clientelist and corrupt forms of politics. However, some commentators doubt how far old habits have changed, berating the M5S's promise to introduce a minimum income for all – which proved especially attractive in the southern part of the country – as a new version of electoral bribery. And it remains to be seen whether traditional power structures and networks in the south will succeed in influencing and ‘domesticating’ the M5S.

Italian politics can appear chaotic at times, while Italian society has seemingly become used to developing independently of political trends. Perhaps more importantly, whenever chaotic politics has prevailed, it has severely limited Italy's influence at both EU and wider international levels.



**Anna Bull** is professor of Italian history and politics at the University of Bath





Supporters give their backing to M5S during a campaign meeting in Rome. Luigi Di Maio's party proved popular among voters who felt the south was being overshadowed by the more prosperous north



Protestors on the streets of Milan demonstrate against the rise of rightwing populism, February 2018



Benito Mussolini's Fascists were part of a long history of extreme politics in Italy

“The Democrats presented themselves in the latest election as the party of ‘stability’ and essentially ‘what Europe wants’. This was a huge failure

**DR ANDREA MAMMONE**

**A**mong the major factors in the recent election was the refugee emergency – with many thousands of refugees arriving in Italy in recent years – and the high level of unemployment aggravated by EU-led austerity. This enabled newer movements to attract part of the working-class vote, which historically would have gone to the left. Recently, centre-left parties, such as Matteo Renzi's Democratic Party, have been moving towards the centre and often embracing neoliberalism (this is also a European trend). The Democrats presented themselves in the latest election as the party of ‘stability’ and essentially ‘what Europe wants’. This was a huge failure, and proved their misunderstanding of protest votes and anti-EU feelings across Europe. Newer

movements were able to attract much of the youth vote, with the Lega Nord almost monopolising the vote in the north, and the Five Star Movement dominating the south.

So, are these movements entirely new, or do they have links with the Italian political past? There is a long history of anti-politics and extremism in Italy. Italy invented the term ‘fascism’ in the 1920s and has never had a full reckoning after the war with its racist past under Benito Mussolini. Until the 1980s, Italy had the most successful western neo-fascist party: the Italian Social Movement (MSI). And today, the Brothers of Italy movement, campaigning for a ‘pure’ national identity, sees itself in the MSI tradition.

But newer political forces and styles have also come to the fore in recent decades, reflecting change in Italian and European society. In the 1990s, Silvio Berlusconi arrived on the scene, a media tycoon and creator of the Forza Italia party, who led four governments, while being plagued with allegations of corruption and sex scandals. He represented a ‘textbook’ combination of populism, demagoguery, post-truth and media politics. And he was successful at creating and merging parties, and reshaping alliances that included both liberals and the far right.

Berlusconi is still present in Italian politics, but no longer so influential. It is hard to describe his legacy. In some ways, today's developments are the outcome of

Berlusconism as a wider political culture. His tenure led to a further legitimisation of rightwing extremism. The idea that the leader has a link with the common citizen, and that the ordinary people are better than the elites, was also highlighted by the first Berlusconi surge. And these are still popular themes with successful Italian parties today.

But the real winners of the latest election also show newer features, responding to developments in the last few years such as the refugee and Eurozone crises. The M5S is actually a product of the modern social-media age, emerging from dissatisfaction with the failures of the traditional parties. The Northern League was a long-term ally of Berlusconi, but is now electorally surpassing him. It started as a regionalist group, but has now adopted a genuine far-right, anti-EU, anti-immigrant agenda. In this sense, ‘populism’ alone does not explain the rise, nor is it the main feature, of such groups. **H**



**Dr Andrea Mammone** is a historian of modern and contemporary Europe at Royal Holloway, University of London

#### DISCOVER MORE

##### BOOK

► **Modern Italy: A Very Short Introduction** by Anna Bull (OUP, 2016)

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Michael Wood on... **immigration**

## “Many who arrived on the *Windrush* had risked their lives for Britain”

“When, in February, I wrote a column about the British Nationality Act of 1948, I could hardly have imagined how relevant it would become to a story that has dominated news headlines over the past month.

The act, as readers may recall, was one of 20th-century Britain’s most extraordinary pieces of legislation. The fruit of the Commonwealth Conference of 1947, it came out of the tumultuous time in which the empire was breaking up, leaving India tragically partitioned. The act gave British citizenship, and with it the right to travel to and settle in Britain, to the people of the empire – in theory, a quarter of the Earth’s population. It was while the bill was being debated in June 1948 that the *Empire Windrush* landed at Tilbury, with 492 people from Jamaica seeking to live and work in Britain; the symbolic beginning of Commonwealth migration in the 1950s and 60s, and, as we see it now, a landmark in our national history.

The 1948 act was never intended to inaugurate mass migration into Britain. It was to bring people in to help battered postwar Britain’s public services, transport and NHS. But lest we think the welcome was open-hearted, there were those who thought the *Windrush* should not be allowed to land; even a few hundred Jamaicans, many of them veterans who had fought for Britain against Hitler, were felt by some to be too many. The newcomers faced horrendous racism and discrimination from the outset.

Now we know that, in their campaign against illegal immigration, the government has called into doubt the citizenship of the *Windrush* generation and their children and grandchildren. Incredibly, even their landing cards have been destroyed – an extraordinary act of vandalism of important sources for future historians, let alone as vital documents for personal and family histories.

Seventy years on, the act no longer stands. The Brave New World it heralded was dismantled by the 1971 and 1981 acts, which introduced strict immigration criteria. But nothing could change the status of the 1948 migrants and their descendants. The migrants (as it said on their

passports) came as British citizens, a status confirmed by the 1948 Nationality Act when it came into force a few months after *Windrush* landed.

The big historical picture, though, seems to me worth restating – for the British empire shaped us all. Whatever our origins, it is the biggest fact in our modern history. For more than 200 years, the empire occupied many lands, exploiting their people and their resources. But by Queen Victoria’s death, it was already acknowledged that British citizenship extended to all the peoples of the empire. In the First World War, more than 1 million Indians fought for king and country, and 74,000 died; even more Indians were killed in the Second World War. Some 10,000 men and women from the West Indies volunteered for military service in the Second World War, and thousands more joined the Merchant Navy and the RAF, where 400 air crews and 6,000 ground staff were from the West Indies – more than from any other part of the empire. The *Windrush* generation had not only fought for Britain, but many came as skilled engineers, mechanics and fitters, to find jobs less skilled than those they had trained for.

“We were coming to the mother country,” said Bristol’s first black ward-sister, the community leader Princess Campbell, interviewed in our series *The Great British Story*. The 1948 act simply confirmed that. In one sense, how many people came was beside the point; the government’s job was to give them homes and work. We were the former imperial power and everyone living in Britain had benefited from the empire – except, of course, those who had lost their lives.

To ignore those facts now, 70 years on, is not only to misrepresent our laws; it is also to misunderstand the meaning of our history. But to see the mainstream press and papers now treat the *Windrush* generation as a national treasure is a good sign. Seventy years is a long time but thankfully, despite the actions of our government, our collective memory is longer. ■

**For more on the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* in 1948, look out for David Olusoga’s feature in our July issue**

### Michael Wood

is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series and his books include *The Story of England* (Viking, 2010)



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ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

# LETTERS

## Heroes in the sky

LETTER  
OF THE  
MONTH

Surely, no one who served in the Second World War could doubt the commanding role played by the RAF in securing final victory from the Battle of Britain onwards. In his excellent article *How the RAF Won the War* (April), Patrick Bishop referred to the work of Typhoons and Spitfires of Second Tactical Air Force “roaring overhead, hacking at the retreating Germans” in the final stages of the war in north-west Europe.

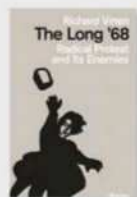
As a member of a commando brigade at the time, I can certainly recall Second TAF's effectiveness. It was April 1945 and we were engaged in a bitter three-day battle in dense woodlands on the far side of the river Aller, at Essel in Lower Saxony. Opposing us were troops from three battalions of SS panzers and Wehrmacht fusiliers. In the final stages of the battle, rocket-firing Typhoons of

Second TAF ensured victory with a short, precise and totally professional attack.

A few days before the end of the war in early May, we also witnessed one of the last aerial dog-fights – between two lone planes, a Spitfire and a Messerschmitt. The Spitfire won, and the dead body of the German pilot fell about a mile away from us. We buried him in a field in a temporarily marked grave. I've always thought that this incident somehow symbolised the RAF's complete supremacy.

**Bryan Samain, Suffolk**

● We reward the Letter of the Month writer with our 'History Choice' book of the month. This issue, it's *The Long '68: Radical Protest and its Enemies* by Richard Vinen. Read the review on page 71.



## Did the RAF really win the war?

*How the RAF Won the War*, read the title of your April cover feature. Now, I know that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Air Force, and that the RAF played a vital role in defeating the Nazis, but I thought that title was a bit over the top. After all, it could easily be argued that the war in Europe was won by the Russian army or the United States Army Air Forces.

The Russian army won a decisive victory at Kursk in the summer of 1943, before beginning its inexorable advance west. And the bombers and fighters of the USAAF's Eighth Air Force achieved daylight air superiority over Germany in the spring of 1944, ensuring the virtual absence of the Luftwaffe during the Normandy landings, and the eventual destruction of Germany's war industries by bombing.

As for the far east, one may as well ask if the Royal Navy's British Pacific Fleet – the most powerful fleet Britain ever sent into battle – won the war against Japan. It certainly achieved much, and not without sacrifice, but I suspect the American army and navy were well capable of dealing with the Japanese forces on their own!

**Steve Wright, Somerset**

## The RAF's mistaken priorities

While intending no disrespect to the anniversary of the RAF, there is a case to be made that the RAF was nearly responsible for *losing* the war. Winston Churchill claimed that the only thing that really frightened him was the U-boat offensive, which came perilously close to starving the country and interrupting the American build-up.

The navy recognised that the most effective strategy was to target the U-boats in transit to and from their hunting grounds, but the requested resources for Coastal Command were denied by RAF commanders Arthur Tedder and Arthur Harris, who were committed to the (morally questionable) strategic bombing offensive.

Finally, when persuaded to support the Royal Navy, they did so by bombing the submarine bases, but with little effect. Eventually, sense prevailed and Coastal Command

was reinforced, with dramatic results on the submarine war. The delay cost many lives and nearly the war.

**Andy Meredith, East Hothly**

## Look beyond the war in Europe

I agree with Patrick Bishop that air power won the Second World War, but while the RAF deserves so much credit for victory in Europe, the war was not just fought against Germany. It was also fought against Japan in the Pacific, and it was US naval air power that achieved the crucial victories in that theatre, at battles such as Coral Sea, Midway, the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot and Leyte Gulf.

I also found it disappointing that the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm did not get any mention in Patrick Bishop's feature. The Royal Navy led the way in pioneering the development of the aircraft carrier, seeing (at least in some quarters) beyond the age of the battleship. Surely in this celebration of British air power in the Second World War, there should have been room for the River Plate, Taranto, Malta, the East Indies, etc.

**Jared Leavitt, St Albans**

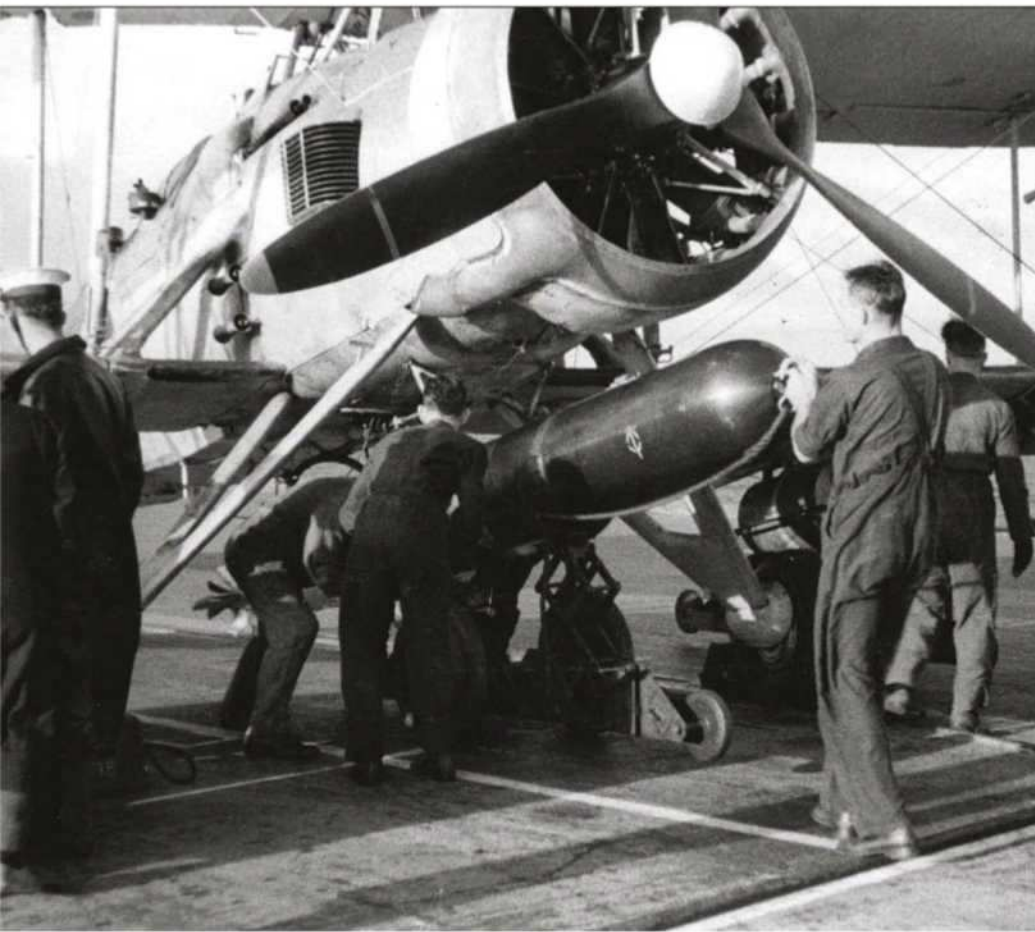
## Victory on land and sea

Both in concept and content, Patrick Bishop is profoundly mistaken. The achievements and bravery of the RAF's men and women are beyond doubt, but final victory – as always – had to be won on the ground.

He is also, like too many writers, sea-blind. Or at least sea-myopic. The Battle of the Atlantic was *not*, as he implied, a defensive “struggle for survival”; it was the essential starting point of the biggest offensive operation ever – Overlord. Without the Royal and Canadian navies' efforts in keeping the 'Atlantic Bridge' in place for materiel and men, D-Day could never have happened.

The defeat of Italy's navy was also achieved by the Royal Navy, and the





A torpedo is attached to the fuselage of a Fairey Swordfish bomber of the Fleet Air Arm. The FAA played a crucial role during the war, argues Jared Leavitt

breaking of the Afrika Korps was dependent on the destruction wrought on Rommel's resupply lines across 'Mare Nostrum'. Both vigorously offensive strategies. Earlier, the Norway campaign had seen lethal blows dealt against the Kriegsmarine's destroyer force, from which it never recovered; and the aggression and courage of the Royal Navy's coastal forces kept the narrow seas open throughout the war.

Finally, his comment about the Pacific campaign was a red herring; after Pearl Harbor, this was overwhelmingly – and necessarily – a US naval theatre. Mr Bishop did nod towards the Royal Navy's contribution. But in his urge to deliver an unsustainable thesis, he backed himself into an ahistorical cul-de-sac.

**Rob White**, the Maritime Foundation, London

**Editor replies:** Thank you for all the letters that we received in response to Patrick Bishop's piece in April's magazine. Unfortunately, we have not had space to print all of them, but we have tried to give a flavour here of the range of views expressed.

### A transgender hero

I greatly enjoyed your article *Is the World Finally Waking Up to Transgender Issues?* (April). Alongside James Barry, Chevalier D'Eon and Harry Stokes, we must include one of Britain's most controversial and talented authors in the list of transgender heroes: namely, Radclyffe Hall.

Though many consider Hall to have been a lesbian, I would argue that this is not an accurate reflection of how she saw herself – an identity that was limited by a lack of understanding and proper nomenclature that has persisted well into recent decades. Hall dressed in traditionally male attire and, among her friends at least, was known as John. In her biography/memoir, Hall's long-time partner, Una, Lady Troubridge, captures the confusion of how

Radclyffe Hall preferred to wear men's clothes, and was known in her inner circles as John



a trans person was to live in those times, both referring to her beloved Hall as John while also using female pronouns. There simply wasn't another option, particularly for those who had achieved a significant level of fame and thus could not hide their gender behind clothing and a changed name.

Indeed, I would also argue that Hall's novel *The Well of Loneliness* – the focal point of one of the most famous obscenity trials in history – is wrongly considered to be a seminal lesbian novel. It really should be considered the first trans novel for its portrayal of Stephen Gordon, known by the terminology of the time as a 'sexual invert'. We owe Hall an enormous debt of gratitude for her attempt to bring light to this facet of queer culture, even if she had to wear the name of lesbian because there were no other options during that period of time.

**Amy Foster Myer**, Portland, Oregon

### Should have gnome better

Garden gnomes (*Past Notes*, May) go back somewhat further than the 19th century. In Goethe's epic poem *Hermann und Dorothea* (1796-97), we find the lines "Jeder Reisender stand und sah durch die roten Staketen / Nach den Bettlern von Stein, und nach den farbigen Zwergen", which could be translated as "Every traveller stopped, and admired through the red-painted paling / The statues of beggars in stone, and the dwarves all picked out in colours." The action takes place during the French Revolutionary Wars.

**John Julius Norwich**, London

### WRITE TO US

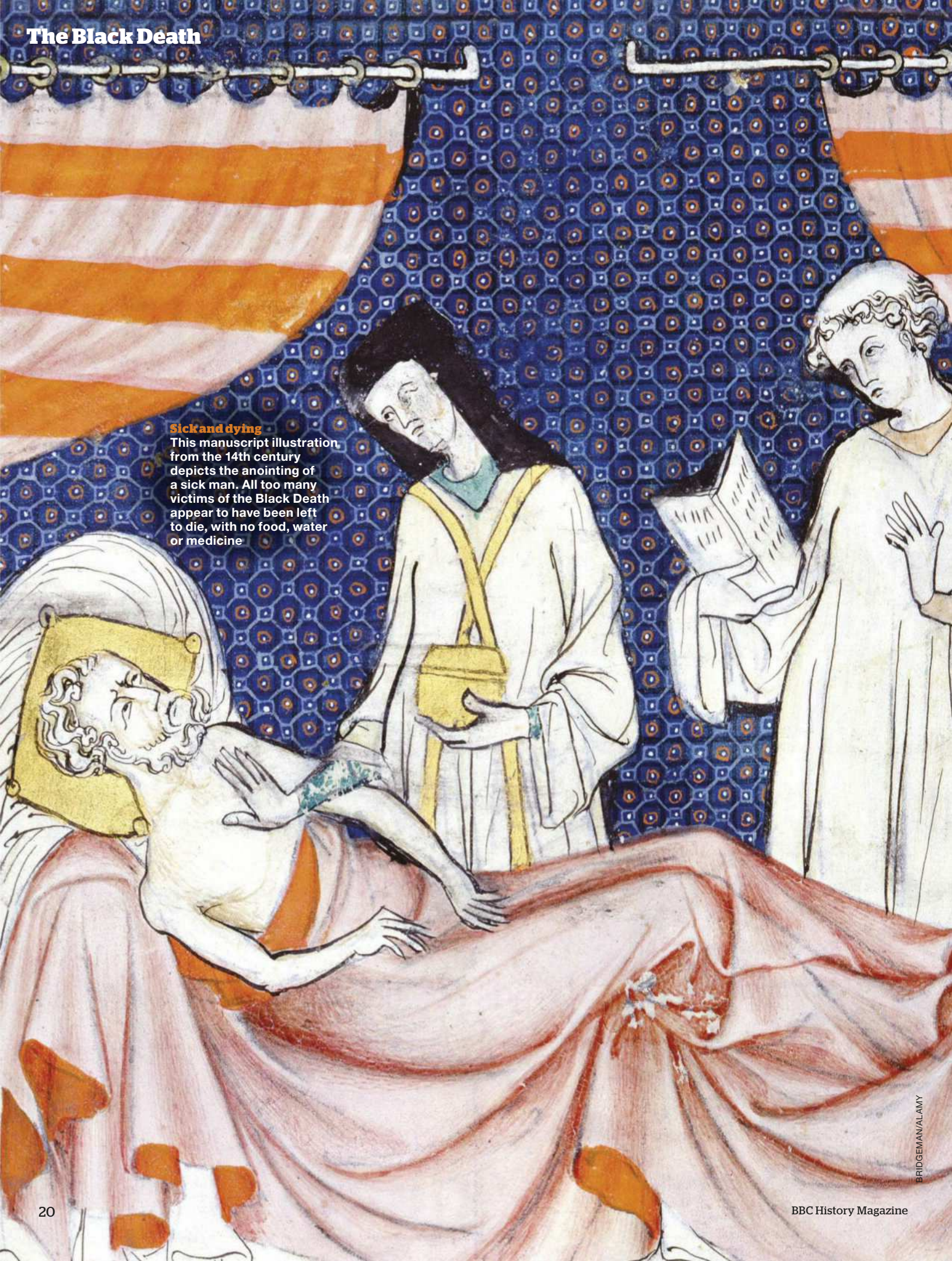
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## Sick and dying

This manuscript illustration depicts the anointing of a sick man. All too many victims of the Black Death appear to have been left to die, with no food, water or medicine



## COVER STORY

# “Oh father, why have you abandoned me?”

In 1347, chroniclers of the Black Death began reporting incidents of mothers, uncles, brothers and wives deserting their plague-stricken relatives and fleeing for their lives. **Samuel Cohn** tells the story of a horrifying, yet little known phenomenon: abandonment



**The face of death**

A skull carving at a medieval plague cemetery in France. The Black Death killed as many as 8 out of 10 people in some communities in Europe

# The Black Death

In 1355, the Italian writer and poet Giovanni Boccaccio wrote a passage of text that – even at a distance of 650 years – is truly chilling. Describing the great plague that had ravaged Europe from the late 1340s, Boccaccio related that the pandemic “caused various fears and fantasies to take root in the minds of those who were still alive and well. And almost without exception,” he went on, “they took a single and very inhuman precaution, namely to avoid or run away from the sick and their belongings.”

What Boccaccio wrote next was more shocking still. “This scourge had implanted so great a terror in the hearts of men and women that brothers abandoned brothers, uncles their nephews, sisters their brothers, and in many cases wives deserted their husbands,” he writes. “But even worse, and almost incredible, was the fact that fathers and mothers refused to nurse and assist their own children, as though they did not belong to them.”

## Extreme self-loathing

The devastation wrought by the Black Death when it swept across Europe from 1347–c1351 was massive and unprecedented. Perhaps as many as a third of all Europeans lost their lives in a succession of ruinous outbreaks of plague. Such was the Black Death’s lethal power, it’s been estimated that it took the world population 200 years to recover to the level at which it stood in the early 1340s.

And this was a psychological calamity for the people of Europe, as well as a physical one. The trauma experienced by those who lived through the Black Death was extreme, and manifested itself in equally extreme ways –

most notably in outbreaks of self-loathing and terrible violence.

By the last months of 1348, across the continent, flagellants processed bare-foot, whipping themselves as they sang the passion of Christ. One German chronicler, Henry of Hervodia, described their whips: cattle prongs tipped with two to four iron bits, which tore the flesh, drawing blood that spilt down naked backs to their “lower parts”.

More deadly still was a surge of violence directed at minority groups. Jews were accused of a litany of crimes including contaminating food supplies through their concoctions “of frogs and spiders mixed into oil and cheese to destroy Christendom”. Such accusations were quickly followed by pogroms. The volumes of the *Germania Judaica*, painstakingly amassed from archives in Germany, Austria and other central European regions, report the annihilation of at least 235 Jewish communities at around the time of the Black Death.

But take a close look at the contemporary chronicles and another disturbing, and more widespread, psychological response to the Black Death emerges from the pages. It was a response that rocked society – indeed, the individual family unit – to its core. This was the phenomenon to which Giovanni Boccaccio referred in his *Decameron*, completed around 1355: abandonment.

From Krakow to Dublin, Sicily to Scotland, a picture emerges of those not yet struck down by the pandemic being gripped by such terror of being infected themselves that, instead of remaining in the family home and nursing their dying loved ones through their last illnesses, they fled for their lives.

Boccaccio’s emotive descriptions of brothers abandoning dying brothers, wives abandoning husbands and, worst of all, fathers and mothers abandoning sons and daughters, have made him the best known of the chroniclers of abandonment. But his was hardly the only account of this phenomenon – and it was far from the first.

In fact, stories of abandonment began emerging in the chronicles almost as soon as the Black Death reached Europe. No sooner had the plague made landfall at Messina, Sicily in October 1347 than friar Michele da Piazza reported: “Neither priests nor sons, nor fathers nor any other kinsmen dared enter [to bury the dead],” and that the living did not enter houses of the dead “even to collect their goods or money.”

The Florentine chronicler Marchionne di Coppo Stefani’s descriptions of abandonment were even longer than Boccaccio’s, and they displayed similar levels of disgust. He claimed that, after being left to their fates by their loved ones, many sufferers “died without



Jews are burned alive by their Christian neighbours, as shown in a 14th-century Flemish illumination. Modern historians have written extensively on spasms of violence and self-loathing but the most widespread psychological response to the Black Death appears to have been abandonment

confession or other sacraments”, and others by starvation because “no one would bring them food”. Stefani also laced his abandonment tales with accusations of cruel deception, relating how the fit and well would tell their ailing loved ones: “I am going for the doctor.” They would then, he tells us, lock the door without leaving food, water or medicine and were never seen again.

But where did they go? Boccaccio provides a possible answer. He tells of people bonding together in small groups to “entertain themselves with music and whatever other amusements they were able to devise”. In the introduction to his famous collection of 100 stories, he describes a band of distinguished youth fleeing to the hills of Settignano, where they delighted themselves without once mentioning the Black Death or those they left behind facing the carnage back in Florence.

Despite the delightful stories told by his band of genteel ladies and men, Boccaccio’s introduction to their tales hints that such escapees from Florence’s Black Death horrors were acting callously. The vast majority of chroniclers were equally scathing of those who abandoned their friends and family members. Louis Sanctus, the northern



Drawing blood Flagellants – like the one shown here, whipping himself in a 1493 illustration – were a common sight across central Europe in the wake of the Black Death



musician at the papal court of Avignon, was the only chronicler to express any sympathy with those who refused to visit the plague-afflicted, explaining that such close proximity would almost certainly lead to sudden death.

Conversely, Matteo Villani, Florence's principal chronicler of the Black Death, went as far as to suggest that had citizens not abandoned the sick in such numbers, the rate of mortalities would have been lower. Citizens who fled, he argued, had violated Christian tenets and aped the habits of infidels. For the German Matthias of Neuberg, "such things" were just "too horrible to write or tell" – and Matthias had just recounted the burning alive of entire Jewish communities.

And it wasn't just survivors abandoning their kith and kin who attracted the chroniclers' ire. Along with numerous writers, Boccaccio was equally horrified by the flight of doctors, notaries and gravediggers, lambasting their refusal to render essential services to the stricken.

Some members of the clergy also came under fire – though they had their defenders. Both Michele da Piazza and Jean de Venette – the first writing from Messina; the other in rural Beauvaisis in northern France – castigated

After declaring,  
"I am going for  
the doctor", they  
would lock the  
door **and leave,**  
**never to be**  
**seen again**

"the cowardly priests" (de Venette's words). But they absolved their fellow friars for not having abandoned their flocks. The abbot of Tournai defended his town's clergy, arguing that they heard confessions, administered the sacraments, and visited the afflicted. Yet, according to the Florentine poet Pucci, neither friar nor priest dared to approach the ill.

### **Suffer little children**

One of the most striking visions of Black Death abandonment came from a lawyer of Piacenza, Gabrielle de' Mussis. "Have pity,

have pity, my friends," laments a plague sufferer. "At least say something, now that the hand of God has touched me. Oh father, why have you abandoned me? For you forget that I am your child? Mother, where have you gone? Why are you now so cruel to me when only yesterday you were so kind? You fed me at your breast and carried me within your womb for nine months."

Most modern historians of the Black Death have tended to pay abandonment stories little attention – and de Mussis' tale offers a clue as to why. That's because it was almost certainly fabricated. Many academics simply don't believe that these stories are based in reality – dismissing them as mere literary devices employed to dramatise the horrors of the pandemic. What's more, they argue, these accounts were often copied from a factually dubious original and simply passed around from one country to the next.

But does this theory stand up to scrutiny? Could the proliferation of abandonment stories really be a case of fake news promulgated around Europe on an industrial scale?

In the days before the printing press, it was surely impossible for such stories to travel distances of more than a thousand miles



Plague victims are buried in Tournai, 1349, in a 14th-century illumination. After the Black Death of 1348, attitudes and actions towards sufferers in subsequent plagues shifted from callous indifference to anguish and assistance

– sometimes in a matter of days – appearing over vast expanses of Europe, from the shores of Croatia to the heart of Paris.

And if they were mere literary devices, copied and layered onto accounts of the plague for dramatic effect, why were they so varied? Boccaccio was unique in describing people bonding with ones they trusted and escaping to the countryside. Matteo Villani was alone in suggesting that had citizens not abandoned the sick in such numbers, the death toll would have been lower.

The anonymous author of the *Storie Pistoresi* and the chronicle of the abbot of Cremona both claimed that abandonment was more common when the dying relative was stricken with pneumonic plague. By contrast, Matteo Villani, a chronicler from Rimini, argued that the first sight of buboes made relatives run. These wide discrepancies hardly point to one chronicler slavishly copying another.

## A change of heart

But there's another reason to suspect that the abandonment stories were grounded in solid historical fact – after 1348, they all but disappear. In contrast to the Black Death experience of 1347–51, in the hundreds, if not thousands, of accounts of later plagues to the end of the 18th century, abandonment stories vanish almost completely. And, of the few that remain, none fills page-plus descriptions as they had for the earlier outbreak. Instead, expressions of horror changed dramatically in accounts of plagues after 1348.

In 1405, Padua's Gatari chroniclers recounted a "ferocious plague" that struck their city. War in the countryside sparked crop failure and malnutrition, which drove

peasants into Padua. Overcrowding and worsening sanitary triggered the tell-tale signs of buboes and death within two or three days. The Gatari then went on to describe the mass burials that inevitably followed: "Every day a large ditch was dug in the churchyard and in every ditch 200 or even 300 were thrown, one over the other, covered little by little with dirt. And these were citizens... Some carried their fathers on their shoulders to the grave; others, their sons in their arms; husbands, wives; wives, husbands; brothers, sisters, with such anguish, screams, and cruel cries that could be heard in heaven."

## Lamenting the dead

Unlike the accounts of 1348, Gatari's descriptions of plague in 1405 mention nothing of cruel abandonment splintering families, or of doctors, notaries and priests abjuring their duties. Now, at the head of the carts collecting the dead, was a priest followed by fathers, sons, husbands, wives, brothers and sisters who, despite fears of contagion, carried the dead on their shoulders. Instead of callous indifference without tears – treating deceased family members as no more than "dead goats" (to use Boccaccio's words) – screams over lost loved ones now reached the heavens.

If the descriptions of flight and neglected duties were literary devices without foundation in social realities, why did they suddenly disappear after 1348? Why did chroniclers like Stefani and Giovanni di Pagnolo Morelli, who described in great detail abandonment during the Black Death of 1348, suddenly stop doing so in descriptions of subsequent plagues that they lived through? The answer is surely a transforma-

After the initial shock sparked by 1348's terrible mortality rates, people began to realise that **abandonment was counter-productive**

tion in social attitudes to plague-sufferers.

While the Black Death tore societies apart – shattering their foundation stones: the family unit – later ones united inhabitants across city walls, factions, class and gender. This was seen during the widespread and deadly plague of 1399–1400, which gave rise to the Bianchi peace movement: men, women and children across social classes and the clergy marched together through central and northern Italy to condemn factional violence and even small acts of litigation among neighbours.

As reports by Matteo Villani and the Pisan chronicler Rinieri Sardo suggest, one reason for the about-face in this emotional history appeared as early as the last stages of the Black Death itself. After the initial months of shock sparked by unprecedented levels of death in 1348, people began to realise that there was nowhere to hide and that flight and abandonment were counter-productive. First at Ragusa (present-day Dubrovnik) then city-states across the Italian peninsula, municipal governments supported these new instincts with plague legislation, hospitals and charitable organisations.

In the interests of community and self-preservation, these later waves of plague stimulated charity and self-sacrifice rather than hate, violence and abandonment. **H**

Samuel Cohn is professor of medieval history at the University of Glasgow. His books include *Epidemics: Hate and Compassion from the Plague of Athens to AIDS* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

## DISCOVER MORE

### LISTEN AGAIN

► To listen to Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss how the Black Death influenced the structure and ideas of medieval Europe, on Radio 4's **In Our Time**, go to [bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00bcqt8](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00bcqt8)



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**BBC** **HiSTORY** MAGAZINE'S

# Bayeux Tapestry Day

## The Landscape of the Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of the Norman Conquest within the context of an identifiable geography. This talk will trace the locations where the events of 1066 (and earlier) occurred.



**Trevor Rowley** is emeritus fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford and author of *An Archaeological Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*.

## The Bayeux Tapestry as Embroidered History

The tapestry tells a story of the Conquest which in many ways seems to corroborate the immediately post-Conquest Norman literary accounts, and in some ways does not. The commentary in the margins often seems studiously to avoid the point of the action illustrated below. Why was the designer being so coyly careful?



**George Garnett** is professor of medieval history at the University of Oxford. He wrote *The Norman Conquest: A Very Short Introduction*.

## The Bayeux Tapestry as Seen from the Back

Alexandra Lester-Makin has studied photographs of the back of the Bayeux Tapestry and analysed the threads and stitches in the photos to see what they tell us about the embroiderers and organisation of work. This talk will discuss the results so far.



**Alexandra Lester-Makin** has a PhD in early medieval embroidery from the University of Manchester. She is also a professional embroiderer.

## Depicting the Battle of Hastings: the Bayeux Tapestry and Other Sources

The Bayeux Tapestry presents a graphic account of 14 October 1066, but its purpose is not to tell us what actually happened. This talk sets the tapestry's account in the context of other narratives to address how the battle was understood.



**Leonie Hicks** is senior lecturer in medieval history at Canterbury Christ Church University, and author of *A Short History of the Normans*.

## Myths and Mysteries of the Bayeux Tapestry

Many assumptions are made about what the tapestry shows and within the embroidery are scenes not easily understood. This talk will unpick some of its myths and mysteries.

**Michael Lewis** is an expert on the Bayeux Tapestry and a member of the Bayeux Tapestry Scientific Committee. He works at the British Museum, and is the author of *The Real World of the Bayeux Tapestry*.



**TERMS AND CONDITIONS** We reserve the right to replace any speaker with an alternative of equal stature in the unlikely event that they are unable to attend. Please let us know when booking of any special access requirements. *BBC History Magazine* subscribers should have their subscriber number to hand when booking. Tickets are non-refundable and places are limited. There will be a transaction fee of £2.50 for postal tickets. There will be no transaction fee for e-tickets.

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**St Anne's College, Oxford,  
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**With Trevor Rowley,  
George Garnett, Alex  
Lester-Makin, Leonie Hicks  
and Michael Lewis**

*Following the news that the Bayeux Tapestry is set to arrive in Britain in 2022, we've assembled five experts to explore its history and the era that spawned it. The day will also include a buffet lunch.*

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# THE GEORGIAN GUIDE TO PERFECT PARENTING

To give birth in the 18th century was to enter a minefield of high mortality rates, stranger-danger and rampant commercialisation.

**Elizabeth Foyster** offers five tips to those taking the plunge into the fraught world of Georgian parenting

A mother and son dote on one another in a painting by George Romney. Georgian moralists feared that overly indulgent parents were making their sons excessively effeminate

SUPERSTOCK

## BIRTH

### Prepare to meet the 'man-midwife'

The 18th century saw male doctors storming Britain's delivery rooms

Women gearing up to give birth in Georgian Britain needed all the moral support they could get – and, for centuries, that support had come exclusively from one gender. Throughout the Tudor and Stuart periods, the delivery room was a woman-only zone, populated by female relatives, friends and neighbours offering encouragement and advice. The father was nowhere to be seen, banished from the birthing room to wait for news elsewhere.

But then, in the 18th century, this traditionally female bastion was disrupted by the 'man-midwife'. William Smellie (1697–1763) was the most influential of a new generation of male medical practitioners who claimed to be every bit as knowledgeable about childbirth as women. And he bolstered his claim by using a

novel instrument: the forceps.

While the forceps would go on to save the lives of many mothers and babies, midwives like Sarah Stone, author of *Complete Practice of Midwifery* (1737), were initially sceptical about their benefits, one criticism being that they were responsible for passing on infection.

Female midwives were also suspicious about the motives of the men who made their careers, and fortunes, from contact with women when at their most vulnerable. These male arrivistes could not possibly comprehend the sensitivities of a female body, they claimed. Midwife Elizabeth Nihell was so enraged by Smellie's presence in delivery rooms that she accused him of having "the delicate fist of a great-horse-god-mother of a he-midwife".



Isaac Cruikshank's caricature of "A newly discovered animal: the man-midwife". Behind the man (left) are the surgical instruments upon which he relies, while the woman offers a homely setting with the comforts of a warm fire



A woman nurses her child in an engraving from 1810. The Georgians widely extolled the health benefits of breastfeeding

## THE FIRST YEAR

### Accept the will of God

High mortality rates made child-rearing a stressful – often tragic – experience

Starting a family in Georgian Britain was not an undertaking for the faint-hearted. Babies could inspire great joy but they could also bring heartache. Child mortality was far higher in the 18th century than it is today, and newborns were at the greatest risk. It's estimated that as many as one in four babies died before reaching their first birthday. After all the anticipation and planning that was required for parenthood, losing a child so young was a bitter blow.

Yet parents were expected to accept their children's deaths as part of God's will, and some took comfort from their belief that they would be reunited in heaven. John Verney, writing to his sister after the death of his son in 1737, told her "he left us yesterday morning, about nine o'clock, and we can never see him more in this world, but I trust in God we shall all meet in heaven, where I daresay he now is in perfect happiness, which I can never more enjoy here for want of him".

Keenly aware of the perils of childhood, many Georgian parents kept detailed accounts of aches, pains and changes in the



## Shower your children with gifts

Georgian parents were put under relentless pressure to splash their cash

The commercialisation of childhood is far from a new phenomenon. In fact, it can be traced back to the 18th century – and with that came a new kind of social pressure to demonstrate affection by spending money.

This phenomenon stemmed from what the historian JH Plumb dubbed a “new world” of children, in which childhood was recognised as a special period of life that should be free from work – and full of toys.

Georgian society was racing towards industrialisation, and this was reflected in the way that toys were made and marketed. Newspaper advertisements and trade cards from specialist producers bombarded parents with information about a seemingly endless supply of new purchases.

These purchases included everything from dolls and toy soldiers to rattles and, last but not least, the latest fashions. But parents who dressed their offspring in the best garments that money could buy risked exposing them to a new kind of crime: being abducted and stripped of their clothes. One 19-month-old was found “nearly dead with cold” in a passageway near a pawn shop in Chancery Lane, London in 1818. *The Times* reported that the child “had been robbed of its shirt, boots, petticoat, feather from the hat, and necklace, only the frock remaining”. With such crimes being committed, it’s little wonder that older Georgian children were warned of the perils of talking to strangers.

This advice was dispensed in children’s books – a brand new phenomenon in Georgian Britain. John Newbery was something of a pioneer in this new field of publishing. He knew all the tricks of marketing: his bestselling *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* (1744) coming with ‘free’ gifts: a ball for a boy and a pincushion for a girl. But he also knew that parents wanted childhood to be a period of preparation for adult life. As his title page declared, his book was not just for amusement, but also for instruction. Playtime



A wooden toy from the 19th century (above) and (left) a doll dating from c1770. It was in the 18th century that childhood came to be regarded as a special time of life, free from work

temperature of their children, in order to anticipate or prevent illness.

Breastfeeding was widely believed to be an effective strategy in fortifying infants against illness, and many mothers were eager to nurse their own children. “My little boy begins to suck very nicely and I am not at all troubled with my milk, he is a charming child and never cries,” wrote Elizabeth Wynne in her diary, just three days after the birth of her first child, Thomas, in 1798.

The wealthiest Georgians, or those who experienced difficulties breastfeeding, sometimes chose to employ a wet nurse. Family archives show that great care was taken to find women who could be trusted to nurture their young charges.

Rearing newborns in the 18th century was seriously hard work, as it is today. But Georgian mothers could console themselves with the knowledge that they enjoyed a higher social standing than their predecessors. Motherhood had by now come to be regarded as a full-time social responsibility, in which women were given the weighty task of raising the next generation. And it was the perceived feminine qualities of patience, forbearance and self-sacrifice that made them suited to this role.

As the Reverend James Fordyce emphasised in his two-volume *Sermons to Young Women* (1766), it was through their mothering that women had the ability to “diffus[e] virtue and happiness through the human race”.

Parents took some comfort from their belief that they would be reunited with their child in heaven



needed to be educational.

Not everyone could afford to buy their children books, toys and new clothes, of course. Parenthood exerted even more financial pressure on the poorest families. With more mouths to feed – and mothers unable to contribute to the household income – many were forced to turn to the poor law (poverty relief from the church and government) for support.

George Romney’s oil on canvas shows two upper-class Georgian children. The boy holds a toy gun while the girl cradles a doll in her arms





This late 18th-century engraving, entitled *Elysium*, depicts a family scene inspired by the Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who argued that children are born innocent



## Find your moral compass

Georgian parents were expected to tease out their children's innate goodness

Parents raising children in the 18th century were doing so at the very moment when Enlightenment ideas were sweeping Europe, a period when the continent's greatest thinkers were considering the development of children's minds as well as bodies.

The works of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau had a significant impact on Georgians' perceptions of childhood. Locke taught parents to think of children as being "white paper, or wax, to be moulded and fashioned as one pleases". In contrast to many religious writers a century earlier,

Rousseau believed that children were born innately good.

Whereas Rousseau thought children could be left to their own devices, Locke pursued a more interventionist approach to parenting. It was nurture not nature that made the difference. "That all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education," he wrote.

Enlightenment philosophers believed that even the youngest of children had the ability to reason – so new parents were expected to harness this by teaching them the basics of right and wrong, as well as

ensuring that they learned to read and write. What's more, at this age, virtually all teaching was done at home, so the onus was on parents to provide it.

Parents also, of course, had to learn how to discipline their children. In the preceding centuries, they had been quick to resort to physical punishment. The Georgian era, however, witnessed a shift to a more forgiving attitude that rewarded children for good conduct. Wilful misbehaviour could result from children not knowing how to govern their emotions, it was thought, and parents were instructed to teach

offspring to exercise their reason to achieve self-control.

Above all – no matter how unruly their child's behaviour, no matter how exasperating they found the whole child-rearing experience – it was essential that parents remained calm. As the Quaker William Thompson wrote: "Some parents are greatly to blame, who when their children have committed a fault, presently fall into a passion... Like commonly begets its like, passion in parents, is apt either to generate the same in their children; or else to render them dumpish, and melancholic."

AGE  
11 UP

## Embrace the empty nest

Most Georgian children had moved out and found work by the time they'd reached 13

It may be hard to believe in today's world of higher education and rising house prices, but back in the 18th century many children had barely reached their teens when they flew the nest.

This was no doubt a painful experience for many. But those Georgians taking the plunge into the world of parenting could at least console themselves with the thought that their offspring were making the transition from dependant to valuable contributor to the family coffers at the tenderest of ages.

Many youngsters began apprenticeships or took up positions in domestic service between the ages of 11 and 13, their new employers and masters becoming surrogate parents. In rural areas, families were often employed as a group, and so children frequently worked alongside their parents.

The offspring of those occupying the higher reaches of the social ladder often left home at an even younger age – especially if they were boys. Georgians firmly believed that living away from home while at school and university was a crucial step in gaining all-important independence. Those who stayed at home for too long often grew up excessively effeminate, they argued, as they'd spent too much time with overly indulgent mothers. In his *Essay on the Nursing and Management of Children* (1748) the physician William Cadogan portrayed the “puny insect” of a man who has been the son of such a mother. It was better, he declared, that boys were hardened by the rigours of competition and boarding school life.

Upper-class girls were prepared for their future married lives via an education provided by home tutors. As for their middle-class counterparts, they were encouraged to develop numeracy as well as literacy skills so they could assist their families with the operation of their businesses.

The writer William Fleetwood acknowledged the fact that letting go could be difficult for parents who had invested so much in their children. He counselled parents to play a prominent role in their children's first marriages, but to take a back seat for second ones. By now, he

Tears are shed in this 1790 painting *Black Monday or the Departure for School*, after William Redmore Bigg. Georgians believed that living away from home was key to developing boys' independence

## The physician William Cadogan portrayed the “puny insect” who had stayed at home with his indulgent mother

wrote, children should be freer to make their own decisions. “Now this is not because the parents are no longer parents,” he explained, “nor the children tied to dutiful obedience; but because that greater age and reason make folks fitter to consider themselves, and look after their own affairs.”

Despite this advice, Fleetwood recognised that parenting was a life-long commitment. Family records show that parents were expected to offer their children emotional and economic support well after childhood had ended. They stepped in if their children's marriages broke down, offered to care for grandchildren, and were a first port of call in a financial crisis. In time, parents could expect their children to reciprocate.

Many children heeded the instructions of advice books, and offered support and shelter to their elderly parents. In the 18th century, the family life-cycle of dependency and care ran full circle. **H**



This 1814 illustration, entitled *The Factory Children*, shows a boy and girl walking to a Yorkshire mill

Dr Elizabeth Foyster is lecturer and fellow in history at Clare College, University of Cambridge. Her books include *The Trials of the King of Hampshire: Madness, Secrecy and Betrayal in Georgian England* (Oneworld, 2016)

### DISCOVER MORE

#### TELEVISION

► For more on Georgian Britain, watch the new series of **Poldark** on BBC One. Turn to p79 for details

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► To listen to Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss childhood on Radio 4's **In Our Time**, go to [bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054653](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054653)



# ARNHEM: A DISASTER IN THE PLANNING

Market Garden, the ill-fated Allied operation to break through the German defences in the Netherlands in September 1944, is often portrayed as a risky yet worthy gamble. In truth, argues **Antony Beevor**, it was a flawed idea from the start, more driven by ego than practical considerations

**T**here are many myths about the battle for Arnhem and Operation Market Garden. Historians of the battle have often been tempted into the 'if-only' trap. If only this, or if only that, had been different, then it would all have turned out to be a brilliant success. This cherry-picking of faults is a grave distraction from the harsh fact that Market Garden was a perfect example of how not to plan an airborne operation.

Market Garden was one of the greatest Allied disasters of the Second World War – immortalised in the 1977 film *A Bridge Too Far*. The plan was for Allied paratroopers and land forces to launch a combined attack, which would break through German defences in the Netherlands. Beginning on 17 September 1944, it ended in failure just a week later, resulting in thousands of casualties. The British airborne troops who spearheaded the assault suffered particularly badly in their doomed attempt to capture the bridge in the Dutch town of Arnhem.

A month earlier, the mood among the Allies had been very different, as their forces routed the Germans in the concluding phases of the Battle of Normandy. As they advanced towards the Reich, the Allied commanders now had to decide on the next step to take. It was here that the disastrous plan was born.

At the heart of the failure in preparation lay the ambition of Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, who had commanded the Allied ground forces in Normandy. He wanted to seize control of Allied strategy by being first across the Rhine so that General Dwight D Eisenhower, supreme commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, would have to give him full priority in supplies and command over American formations. The prospect of 'jumping the Rhine' with an airborne operation leading all the way to the bridge at Arnhem, the northern route into Germany, would force the First US Army to support him on his right flank.

To do this, Montgomery needed the First Allied Airborne Army, formed on 2 August 1944 on the order of Eisenhower, who thought



ALAMY



#### **Wrecked hopes**

The remains of an Allied glider that participated in Market Garden. The abject failure of the operation led to heavy Allied casualties and vicious Nazi reprisals against the local population. Antony Beevor describes it as "a perfect example of how not to plan an airborne operation"

## The key Allied players



### Eisenhower and Montgomery

THE CHIEF AND THE CHEERLEADER

The man in charge of Allied forces in Europe, Eisenhower found the opinionated hero of El Alamein, Montgomery, difficult to work with. Eisenhower even considered sacking Monty after Operation Goodwood, part of the Normandy campaign, but feared a backlash in Britain

### Browning

UP FOR THE FIGHT

The British deputy commander of the First Allied Airborne Army was desperate to command troops in battle and pushed to make Market Garden a reality



### Brereton

SIDELINED FLYER

Monty didn't consult Browning's American boss – or any other airman – over Market Garden



a single agency was required to coordinate airborne and troop carrier units. Despite Eisenhower's devotion to balanced Allied relations, its leadership was lopsided. US general Lewis Brereton's staff consisted mainly of US air force officers. The only senior British officer was Brereton's deputy, Lieutenant General Frederick Browning. Matters were not helped by a strong mutual dislike between Brereton and 'Boy' Browning. The only characteristic the two men shared was vanity.

Browning, a hawk-faced Grenadier Guards officer with the air of a *matinée* idol, was married to the author Daphne du Maurier. Although brave, Browning was highly strung. He was desperate to command an airborne corps in action. His barely concealed ambition, combined with a peremptory manner, did not endear him to American paratroop commanders.

On 3 September, Montgomery met General Omar Bradley to discuss an airborne operation in south Belgium across the river Meuse. They agreed to cancel it, as Bradley wanted the troop carrier aircraft to deliver fuel to Patton's Third Army. But Montgomery had not been straight with Bradley. He promptly

ordered his chief of staff to organise an airborne operation "to secure bridges over Rhine between Wesel and Arnhem". This was to be called Operation Comet, an idea in keeping with Montgomery's ambition to lead the main push into Germany. Needless to say, Bradley was furious when he discovered that Montgomery had tricked him.

### Freezing out the air force

'Boy' Browning was far from alone in his desire to use paratroop and glider forces in a decisive way. American generals longed to try out the new airborne army. Churchill also wanted the operation to boost British prestige. Victory euphoria following the rapid Allied advance from Normandy to Belgium fuelled a mood of optimism.

Unfortunately, Montgomery did not want to consult the RAF over Comet, even though the War Office and Air Ministry had agreed, following airborne chaos in the invasion of Sicily in 1943, that the air force side must lead the planning process. Montgomery even called Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory "a gutless bugger" because he had predicted disaster for the airborne drops that had taken

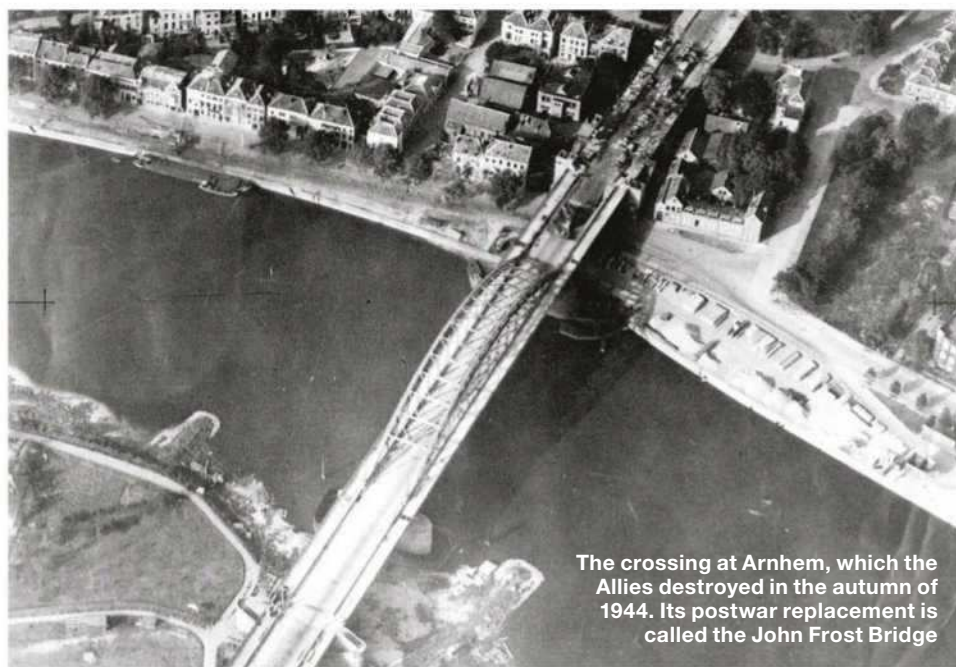
place in the assault on Normandy.

On 9 September 1944, the commander of the Polish Independent Parachute Brigade, Major General Sosabowski, joined Roy Urquhart of the First Airborne Division to discuss Comet with Browning. "Sir," said Sosabowski, "I am very sorry, but this mission cannot possibly succeed." It would be suicide with such small forces, he said. Browning took deep offence.

In Belgium, General Dempsey, commanding the Second British Army, had just reached similar conclusions to those of Sosabowski. General Horrocks of the British XXX Corps (which would later play a key role in Market Garden) had confirmed that a bridgehead over the Albert Canal in north-east Belgium was "being strongly opposed by the enemy".

The next morning, Dempsey went to Montgomery's headquarters and managed to persuade him that Operation Comet was too weak. They needed at least three airborne divisions. Montgomery liked the idea. It would bring the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions under his command. But to Dempsey's dismay, Montgomery also brandished a signal at him that had arrived from London. The first V2 rockets had landed in England, having apparently been fired from the area of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. For Montgomery, who wanted to go north via Arnhem (Dempsey preferred to go east), this was the just the confirmation he needed to justify his decision.

Dempsey summoned Browning. In just two hours, they put together a plan. Market Garden consisted of two parts. Market was the airborne operation, in which the American 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions would seize river and canal crossings from Eindhoven to Nijmegen, with the bridges over the rivers Meuse and Waal, the largest in Europe; the British First Airborne Division and the Polish brigade would drop near Arnhem to capture the great road bridge over the Lower Rhine. Operation Garden would consist principally of Horrocks's XXX Corps, led by tanks, charging north to meet the airborne troops. They would have to travel up a single road, with flood plain on either side broken only by woods and plantations.

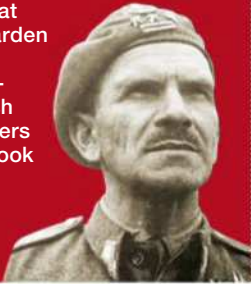


The crossing at Arnhem, which the Allies destroyed in the autumn of 1944. Its postwar replacement is called the John Frost Bridge

### Sosabowski

PLAIN-SPEAKING POLE

The paratrooper warned that Market Garden would fail. This infuriated British commanders and they took revenge



### Dempsey

THE PLANNER

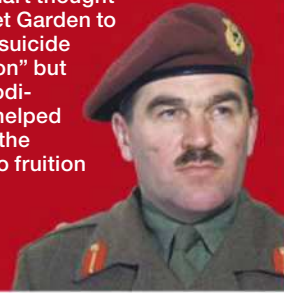
The commander of the British Second Army helped draw up Market Garden but was worried the plan had serious flaws



### Urquhart

THE DUTIFUL SCEPTIC

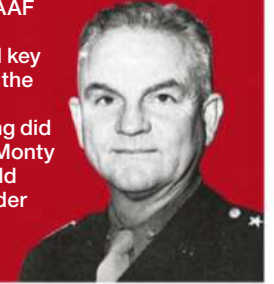
Urquhart thought Market Garden to be "a suicide mission" but methodically helped bring the plan to fruition



### Williams

TRANSPORT CARRIER COMMAND

The USAAF general rejected key parts of the plan yet Browning did not tell Monty he should reconsider



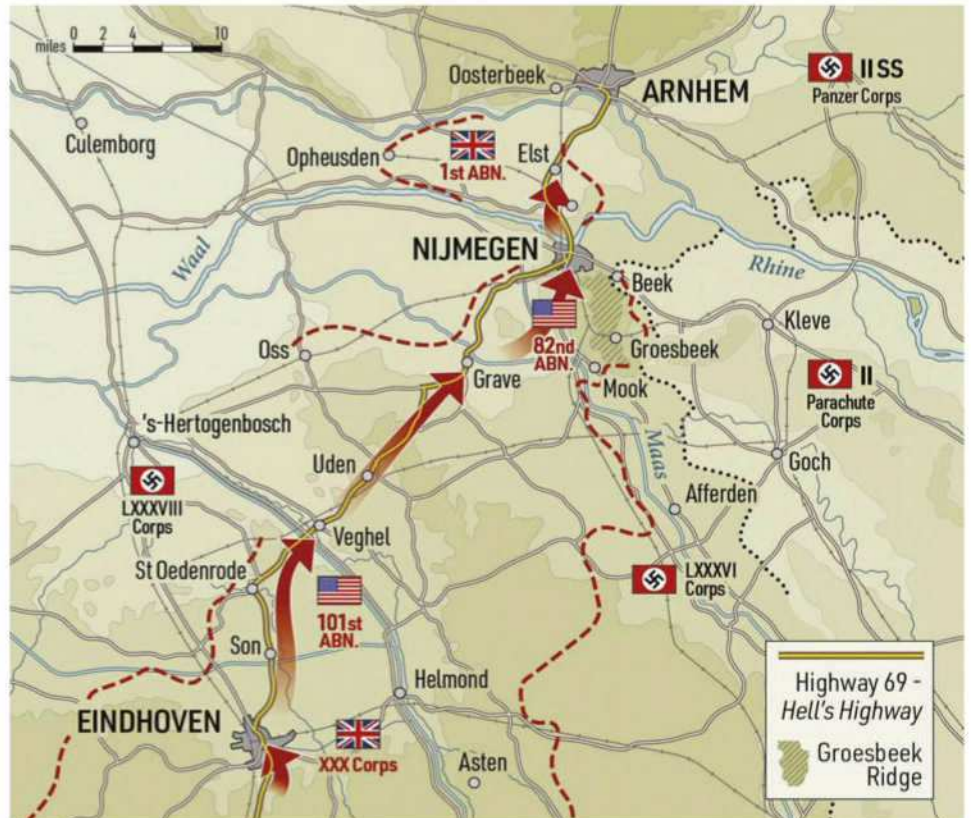
## Montgomery's complaints were halted by Eisenhower saying, "Monty, you can't speak to me like that"

Montgomery now headed for Brussels aerodrome to see Eisenhower. It was the famous meeting when Montgomery's tirade of complaints was halted by Eisenhower putting his hand on Montgomery's knee, and saying: "Monty, you can't speak to me like that. I'm your boss." Eisenhower reminded Montgomery that he had previously given him the support of the First Allied Airborne Army, yet this led to no more than a mention of Market Garden. Here, Eisenhower followed standard US Army practice. Having agreed an overall strategy, he did not believe in interfering further.

By the time Montgomery returned to his tactical headquarters, Dempsey had "fixed with [Browning] the outline of the operation", his diary entry stated. Browning's excitement was palpable. He sent the codeword 'New' from Dempsey's HQ back to First Allied Airborne Army at Sunninghill Park. This signified that a planning conference was to be called that evening. Brereton must have been affronted that Montgomery had made no attempt to consult him in advance. Eisenhower had ordered that planning should be shared. Montgomery had deliberately ignored this.

### Fateful meeting

Twenty-seven senior officers gathered in the Sunninghill Park conference room at 6pm. Astonishingly, neither Urquhart nor Sosabowski had been invited. Browning



Our map of Operation Market Garden shows clearly how far the Allies intended to penetrate into German-held territory, a plan that left airborne troops vulnerable to counterattack

presented what he and Dempsey had worked out, using an airlift timetable based on an earlier operation. Disingenuously, he implied that it had Eisenhower's blessing. Brereton and his staff privately dismissed it as just "a tentative skeleton plan".

They first of all decided that it was to be a day operation because "the supporting air forces available could knock out flak positions in advance". Brereton then asked Major General Williams of IX Troop Carrier Command to speak. His words must have come as a bombshell to Browning. Most of the key assumptions on which he and Dempsey had worked that day were now thrown in the air. "The lift would have to be modified, due to the distance involved, which precluded the use of double tow lift... single tow only could be employed." This meant only half the number of gliders could be taken on each lift.

And since the mid-September days were shorter and the mornings mistier, Williams ruled out two lifts in a day.

These changes signified that it would take up to three days to deliver the airborne divisions, assuming perfect flying weather. No more assault troops would be landing on the crucial first day than with Comet, because half the force would have to be left behind to guard landing and drop zones for later lifts. And the Germans, having identified Allied intentions, would be able to concentrate troops and anti-aircraft batteries against these areas. Williams' obdurate attitude might have contained an element of revenge after Montgomery's refusal to consult the air force side in advance, but Montgomery's determination to impose an ill-considered plan was the real problem.

At a follow-up meeting, American air force



Dutch civilians offer assistance to US paratroopers. The Dutch people would suffer terribly in the fall-out from the failure of Operation Market Garden



officers more or less dictated the choice of drop and landing zones. Their main priority was to avoid German flak batteries on the way in and out. Major General Williams also rejected the idea of glider-borne *coup de main* parties (advance assault troops) to seize the main bridges, a key element in Comet.

Troop Carrier Command wanted to stay well away from the key objectives of Arnhem and Nijmegen bridges because of their anti-aircraft defences. At Arnhem, they were also threatened by the Luftwaffe airfield of Deelen just to the north of the town. As a result, the British division was to be dropped well to the west, with an approach march of between six and eight miles to the road bridge through a major town. Surprise, the most vital element in airborne operations, was therefore lost before they even took off.

## An ill-conceived idea

Operation Market Garden was quite simply a very bad plan right from the start and right from the top. Every other problem stemmed from that. Montgomery had not shown any interest in the practical problems surrounding airborne operations. He had not taken any time to study the often chaotic experiences of north Africa, Sicily and the drop on the Cotentin peninsula in Normandy. His intelligence chief, Brigadier Bill Williams, also pointed to the way that: "Arnhem depended on a study of the ground [which] Monty had not made when he decided on it."

In fact, Montgomery obstinately refused to listen to Dutch warnings about the impossibility of deploying XXX Corps off the single raised road onto the polderland flood plain.

Towering over everything was the fact that the operation depended on everything going right, when it is an unwritten rule of warfare that no plan survives contact with the enemy. This is doubly true of airborne operations. The likelihood of the Germans blowing the road bridge at Nijmegen over the river Waal was barely discussed. Had they done so – and their failure to do so was an uncharacteristic mistake – XXX Corps could never have reached the First Airborne at Arnhem in time.

Flaws in the plan became more evident day by day, but Browning refused to advise Montgomery to reconsider the operation. On 12 September, Sosabowski heard that the number of gliders allocated to him had been reduced. He would have to leave behind all his artillery while his anti-tank guns would be landed on the opposite side of the river to his main force. Two days later, he pointed out that the bridgehead to be held extended for 10

miles in difficult terrain. There was thus the possibility that his brigade might have to drop straight onto enemy-held ground. And if the British failed to capture the bridge, the Poles would be left on the wrong side of the river.

British brigade commanders were not nearly so critical, mainly because they could not face another cancellation. They just wanted to get on with it. And, in the view of Brigadier Hicks, who commanded the First Air Landing brigade, Market Garden at least seemed to stand a better chance than several "absolutely insane" previous plans.

Brigadier General Jim Gavin of the 82nd Airborne was appalled that Urquhart should have accepted drop and landing zones so far from his main objective. Yet Gavin himself had been told by Browning that his first priority was to secure the Groesbeek heights south-east of Nijmegen. They overlooked the Reichswald, a great forest just across the German border, thought to conceal tanks. Browning's argument was that if the Germans occupied the Groesbeek heights, then their artillery could stop XXX Corps reaching

**Operation Market Garden was quite simply a very bad plan right from the start and right from the top**



**ABOVE: Soldiers of the British 11th Parachute Battalion surrender. The battalion was decimated at Arnhem after it was caught in the open while trying to take high ground**  
**LEFT: In an image that gives a sense of the ambition of Operation Market Garden, waves of paratroopers from the First Allied Airborne Army land in the Netherlands in September 1944. But due to planning failures, argues Antony Beevor, many men didn't make it home**

Nijmegen. Its great road-bridge thus slipped down to become a lower priority, partly because the First Allied Airborne Army refused to land *coup de main* glider parties.

Montgomery refused to listen when Eisenhower's HQ expressed concern about German strength around Arnhem. The SS Panzer Divisions *Hohenstaufen* and *Frundsberg* were indeed in the area, although with only three serviceable Panther tanks and fewer than 6,000 men between them. Yet they were still able to form a nucleus onto which other less experienced units could be grafted. What the Allies failed to grasp was the extraordinary ability of the German military machine to react with speed and determination. Almost all the tanks that Allied troops faced in Market Garden were not present at the start of the operation, but were brought in from Germany on *Blitztransport* trains.

Anyone with any experience of airborne operations could see that the British landing and dropping zones, up to eight miles to the west of Arnhem, were too far away to achieve surprise. Major General Richard Gale, who had commanded the Sixth Airborne Division on D-Day, warned Browning that the lack of *coup de main* parties was likely to be disastrous and that he would have resigned rather than accept the plan. Browning refused to agree and asked Gale not to mention it to anyone else as it might damage morale.

There was little Urquhart could do about the other basic flaw. While the First Parachute

Brigade was to march off towards the bridge, Hicks's First Airlanding Brigade would have to remain behind to guard the drop and landing zones ready for Hackett's Fourth Brigade. This meant that Urquhart had just a single brigade to secure his chief objective, and his division would be split in two with a wide gap in-between. Worse still, his signals officers were rightly worried that their radios might not work over that distance.

### Suicide operation

Urquhart gave no hint in any of his reports, or in his book written after the war, that he opposed the plan, but then he was not a man to rock the boat or contradict the subsequent version of events that Arnhem had been a heroic, worthwhile gamble. Yet according to General Browning's aide, Captain Eddie Newbury, on 15 September Urquhart appeared in Browning's office at Moor Park, and strode over to his desk. "Sir," he said, "you've ordered me to plan this operation and I have done it, and now I wish to inform you that I think it is a suicide operation."

The fears of those who had grave doubts about Market Garden were soon realised. Out of the First Airborne Division, only a single battalion made it to the bridge at Arnhem and could hold no more than its northern approach. At Nijmegen, the 82nd Airborne lacked the strength to secure its flank on the German border and also seize the great bridge over the Waal until after the much-delayed

Guards Armoured Division finally arrived. By then the battalion at the Arnhem bridge had been crushed, and on 25 September, the battered remnants of the First Airborne at Oosterbeek had to evacuate to the south bank of the Lower Rhine. Out of approximately 10,600 men north of the Rhine, some 7,900 were left behind – dead, wounded and PoWs.

The Dutch suffered not just the 3,600 killed and nearly 20,000 severely disabled in the fighting, but faced German vengeance afterwards for having helped the Allies. More than 200,000 civilians were forced from their homes, which were looted and destroyed. The northern Netherlands were then subjected to famine quite deliberately in what became known as the Hunger Winter, with around 18,000 dead from starvation. They were the chief victims of the disastrous plan for Operation Market Garden. **H**

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**Antony Beevor** is one of the leading historians of the Second World War. His new book is *Arnhem: The Battle for the Bridges, 1944* (Viking, 2018)

### DISCOVER MORE

#### WEBSITE

► For more on the **battle of Arnhem** head to: [historyextra.com/period/a-bridge-too-far](http://historyextra.com/period/a-bridge-too-far)

#### ON THE PODCAST

► Antony Beevor will be discussing Operation Market Garden on our podcast on 17 May [historyextra.com/podcasts](http://historyextra.com/podcasts)

# *A bite-sized history of dentistry*

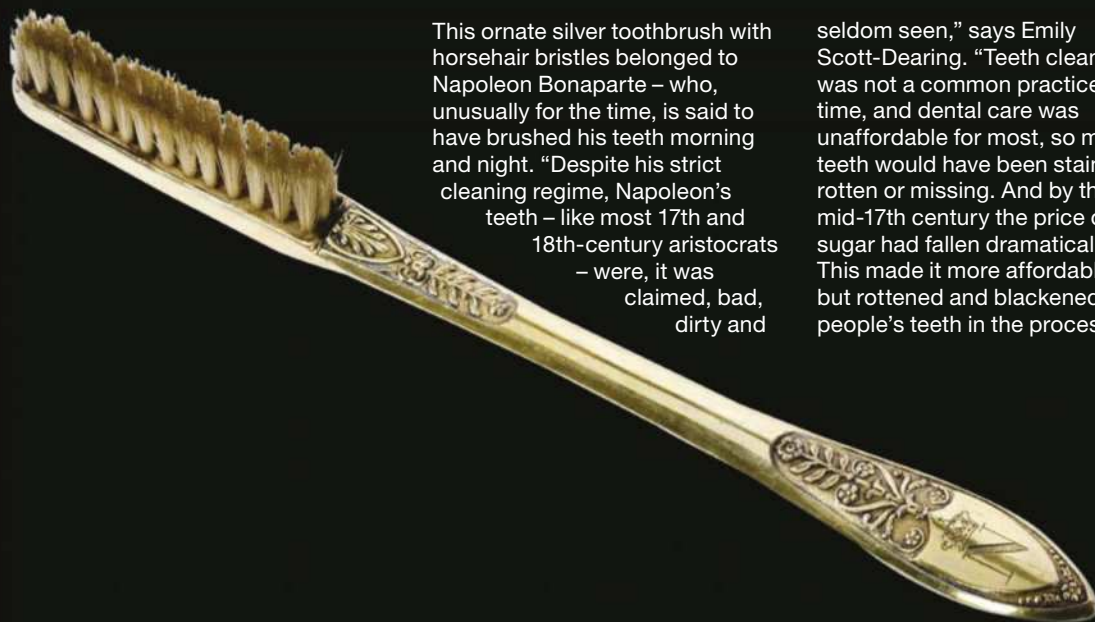
Humanity's long quest for a pearly white smile has produced everything from jewelled Maya tooth implants to ivory dentures given as a wedding present. **Emily Scott-Dearing** introduces **Charlotte Hodgman** to seven of the most fascinating objects from a Wellcome Collection exhibition on the history of teeth

## ▼ **Napoleon's toothbrush**

Not even the strictest cleaning regime could save the French ruler from the damaging effects of sugar

This ornate silver toothbrush with horsehair bristles belonged to Napoleon Bonaparte – who, unusually for the time, is said to have brushed his teeth morning and night. “Despite his strict cleaning regime, Napoleon’s teeth – like most 17th and 18th-century aristocrats – were, it was claimed, bad, dirty and

seldom seen,” says Emily Scott-Dearing. “Teeth cleaning was not a common practice at the time, and dental care was unaffordable for most, so many teeth would have been stained, rotten or missing. And by the mid-17th century the price of sugar had fallen dramatically. This made it more affordable, but rottened and blackened people’s teeth in the process.”



## ► Love bites

These ivory dentures made for an unusual wedding gift

Early dentures were usually carved from hippopotamus and walrus ivory – and, from the early 19th century, porcelain – but their vast cost meant that only the very rich could wear them.

“This partial upper denture from the 18th century is carved from a block of walrus ivory and was presented to a bride as a wedding gift,” says Scott-Dearing. “Ivory dentures were handcrafted to fit the wearer and would have taken several days to make. This would have made them incredibly expensive. What’s more, they would have been difficult and heavy to wear in the mouth and would have become foul smelling and dirty within a few years without regular cleaning.”

One of the most famous early denture-wearers was American president George Washington, who went through several sets during his lifetime, most of which were spring-loaded.



## ◀ Mouth to mouth donations

Rich Georgians happily accepted teeth extracted from the poor – or even the dead

This 1787 etching by Thomas Rowlandson, entitled *Transplanting of Teeth*, demonstrates the huge disparities in access to dental care between rich and poor in the 18th century. The chimney sweep at the centre of the image is having a tooth removed, while the well-dressed woman next to him waits for the extracted tooth to be implanted into her mouth.

“Teeth transplantation had its moment at the end of the 18th century,” comments Scott-Dearing. “Surgeon John Hunter was the first to experiment with transplanting teeth, and in

the 1770s he claimed to have successfully transplanted a human tooth into the comb of a cockerel [the bird’s head is on show in the exhibition]. Human to human tooth transplants soon followed – most staying in place for a year or two – and dentists lured the poor to their surgeries offering money for live teeth.

“Even corpses weren’t immune to the booming trade in teeth. After the battle of Waterloo, it’s said that within 24 hours thousands of dead soldiers were stripped of their teeth, to be set into dentures.”



### ▲ Jewel in the crown

Maya dentists added precious stones to teeth in elaborate religious rituals

Dating from AD 500–1000, this ancient tooth from the Maya civilisation (which occupied most of central America and south-east Mexico) has been skilfully inlaid with a piece of jade.

“The Maya had highly developed dental skills for such an ancient civilisation,” says Scott-Dearing. “Inlaying

a live tooth with a precious stone would have required incredible precision and was probably performed for ritual or religious purposes rather than decorative reasons.

“A round copper tube – similar in design to a plastic straw – would have been spun rapidly between two

hands onto a slurry of powered quartz, which had been placed on the tooth as an abrasive. Repeated spinning would have eventually created a hole in the enamel into which a carefully cut stone could be placed.”



### ◀ Banishing the cobwebs

In the early 20th century, the parlous state of Britons' teeth gave the government a rude awakening

By the 1920s, the British government was more alive than ever to the poor condition of the country's teeth – chiefly as a result of the Boer War (1899–1902) and the First World War. “Many of the men signing up to fight were being rejected purely on the grounds of poor dental health [often due to the financial costs of treating them],” states Scott-Dearing. “The government realised it needed to take action.”

A series of public health campaigns were launched, pushing a preventative approach to oral health with an emphasis on beginning a good dental routine in childhood – as seen in this poster from 1945, by Abram Games, exhorting Britons to “brush the cobwebs away”.

“Companies quickly jumped on the dental bandwagon, creating posters advertising the perfect pearly white smile,” adds Scott-Dearing.



## ▲ Smiles for the masses

The past century has witnessed a rocketing demand for toothbrushes – and dentures

Chew sticks and other teeth cleaning implements have been in use since ancient times, but the first mass-produced toothbrushes were introduced in the late 18th century – the brainchild of Englishman William Addis.

“Addis toothbrushes combined a bone handle with boar or badger hair for bristles”, says Scott-Dearing. “Although the product initially proved popular with the wealthy, it wasn’t until the 20th century that regular teeth cleaning became the norm.” According to the *British Dental Journal*, by 1939 the consumption of toothbrushes was 25 million a year – around one for every two people in Britain.

Toothbrushes were made by hand – as seen in this photograph of women working in an Addis toothbrush factory in the 1920s – until 1935, when bristles began to be made out of nylon.

“The formation of the NHS in 1948 was another landmark moment in dental history”, says Scott-Dearing. “For the first time medical, dental and nursing care were provided with no charge.

“Demand for dentures massively exceeded expectations: within the first nine months of the service, the NHS had provided 33 million individual artificial teeth – a figure that rose to 66 million per annum over the next three years.”



## ▲ Pain barriers

Moles’ feet were employed as weapons in the war on bad teeth

How are moles’ feet – like the ones shown above, collected by the 19th-century folklorist Edward Lovett – connected to dentistry? The answer is that, for centuries, they were employed as a protective agent against toothache, a practice that can be traced back to the Roman writer Pliny.

“Amulets as a form of protection against toothache were common in eras where preventive care of teeth wasn’t understood or widely practised,” remarks Scott-Dearing. “It’s unclear why moles’ feet were linked to teeth. Mole claws, arguably, resemble teeth, while their cramped appearance may have encouraged an association with tooth cramps or pain.”

**Dr Emily Scott-Dearing** is a museum and science communication consultant and co-curator of Wellcome Collection’s **TEETH** exhibition

### DISCOVER MORE

#### EXHIBITION

► **TEETH** is running at Wellcome Collection, London from 17 May–16 September. Admission is free: [wellcomecollection.org](http://wellcomecollection.org)

#### NEXT MONTH

► Look out for our forthcoming feature on the **history of the NHS** in the July issue

# RELIVE HISTORY



Now available to download and keep, Joe Wright's Oscar-winning *Darkest Hour* is the product of tireless innovation off-screen to create an unforgettable portrayal of Churchill's courage on-screen

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**W**hen a film approaches a subject matter as ubiquitous and emotive as WWII, specifically Winston Churchill's determination to take the ultimate stand against Hitler's aggression, the challenge is to bring it to the screen in as fresh and compelling a way as possible. *Darkest Hour* takes this weighty story and breathes new life into it, with the help of powerhouse performances, cinematic flair and spellbinding use of makeup and costume.

Just as the film's plot delves behind the scenes of Churchill's gargantuan task to convince cabinet colleagues and the public alike of the need to challenge Hitler, the inner workings of the production itself make for a fascinating tale. At the centre of it all is

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RIGHT Churchill addresses the nation  
ABOVE Gary Oldman with his Oscar





Gary Oldman's astonishing transformation into Winston Churchill. In the role that won him his long-overdue Academy Award, Oldman masterfully captures the essence of one of the twentieth century's most iconic figures. A significant part of his assuming the role was the astounding prosthetics and make up artistry of Kazuhiro Tsuji, David Malinowski and Lucy Sibbick (pictured on-set with Oldman). Their extraordinary work helped the film pick up another Academy Award for Best Makeup and Hairstyling.

Another intriguing aspect of Churchill's character is his relationship with his formidable wife Clementine, played by Kristin Scott Thomas, whose performance earned her a BAFTA nomination. Far more than just a sounding board and shoulder to lean on, it is she who scolds her husband for attempting to fire his new secretary Elizabeth Layton, played

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT one of the film's many high-powered meetings; Churchill takes to the tube; Winston and Clementine share a tender moment; Lucy Sibbick retouches Oldman's makeup

## RETRACE THE STEPS

### The Underground

One of the film's most distinctive scenes is Churchill's descent onto the London Underground to talk face to face with the public. And why not use the tube to begin a day of location exploration? And if you download and keep the film on your phone or tablet, you can even watch it on the way.

### Churchill War Rooms

Situated a stone's throw from St James's Park, the secret underground headquarters where Churchill worked tirelessly during WWII play a major role in the film. The museum that stands there now also makes a fascinating site to visit on your tour of Churchillian discovery.

### Blenheim Palace

After a train journey of more essential viewing on your device, visit Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, birthplace of our protagonist.



by Lily James, for mishearing him.

Encompassing moments of defiance, courage and bullish aggression, as well as private moments of vulnerability, doubt and even kindness, Churchill's nuanced character and the febrile time in which he lived is vividly realised in Joe Wright's film. Just weeks after its critical acclaim, as well as box office and award season success, you can own this timeless ode to history, and relive it again and again. *Darkest Hour* is available to download and keep across a wide range of digital platforms, much earlier than subscription streaming services. That means you can discover this extraordinary story at your own leisure on Sky Store, Amazon Instant Video, Google Play and iTunes – the latter of which boasts a treasure trove of behind-the-scenes extras to delve into. What better way to start your own digital collection than with this Oscar-winning epic?



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# The woman who crushed the Vikings

**Janina Ramirez** reveals how Æthelflæd – wife, mother, diplomat and, above all, warrior-queen – left an indelible mark on Anglo-Saxon England in the 10th century

ILLUSTRATION BY ELEANOR SHAKESPEARE

There are only a handful of warrior women from the past who have captured imaginations for centuries. The most famous are Boudicca, her chariot complete with spiked wheels, and the armoured teenager, Joan of Arc. These were the exceptions – women in a man's world who men followed into battle.

But there is one warrior woman who is less celebrated. This year, exactly 11 centuries ago, Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, died and was buried in Gloucester. She was exceptional for many reasons. She is one of the few known women who not only held a role within the household as mother and lady – and within the court, as daughter and wife to kings – but also wielded power on the battlefield.

What's more, she is the only queen in English history to have passed her reign directly to her daughter. She is a medieval marvel, but she has been overshadowed by the men who surrounded her in life – her father, Alfred the Great; her husband, Æthelred of Mercia (a kingdom in what is now central England); and her ultimate successor, her nephew, Æthelstan, 'the king of the whole of Britain'. Yet Michael Wood has argued that "without her England might never have happened".

In the 12th century, the historian Henry of Huntingdon declared Æthelflæd to be "so powerful that in praise and exaltation of her wonderful gifts, some call her not only lady, but even king". He praised her as "worthy of a man's name" and "more illustrious than Caesar". So why do we not know more about the Lady of the Mercians, and is it finally her time to shine?

## A world of turmoil

It is difficult to know when Æthelflæd was born. Her parents were married in AD 868 and she is thought to have been their first-born child. The time at which she came screaming into the world was one of turmoil. Just three years earlier, a Great Viking Army had launched a massive assault on East Anglia – one that led the monk and wordsmith Alcuin of York to write: "Never before has appeared such a terror in Britain as we have now suffered from a pagan race."

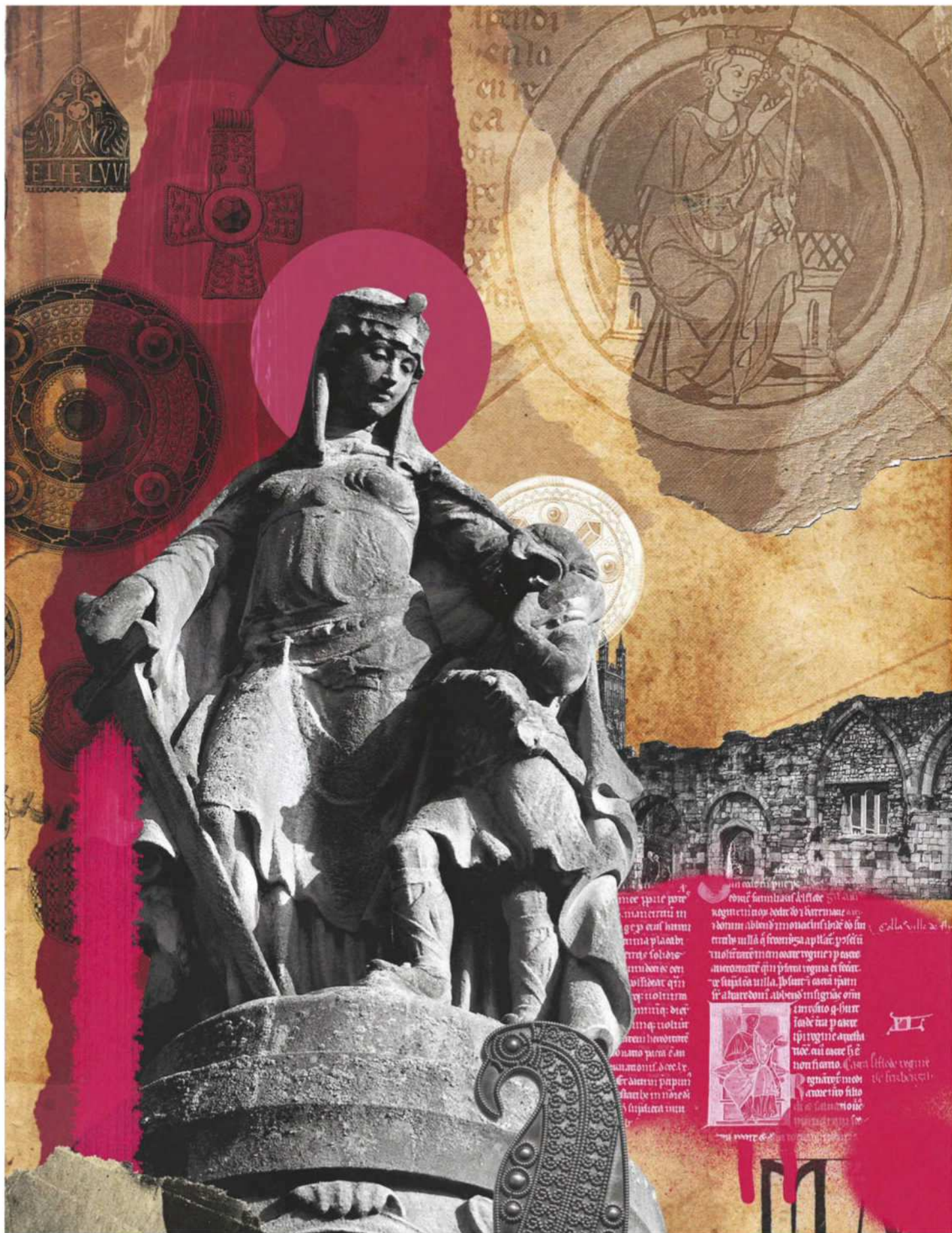
Over more than a decade, a coalition of Norse warriors took land in all the major Anglo-Saxon kingdoms – except Wessex, which had so far managed to defy them. The Vikings' purpose was to conquer the kingdoms completely, yet the battle of Edington in 878 stemmed the tide and a tentative alliance was

drawn up, splitting the country in two between English-ruled territory and lands administered by the Danes (the Danelaw). It was on to this tumultuous stage that Æthelflæd stepped.

There is little information on her childhood, and she first appears in the historical record as a fully grown adult. By this time she is married to Æthelred of Mercia. She is mentioned in Alfred's will, where he leaves her an estate plus 100 pounds, while her husband is bequeathed a precious sword.

As a wife, however, Æthelflæd's story is all too familiar in terms of royal dynastic marriages. Daughter of the king of Wessex and his wife (a Mercian noble, possibly royal, woman), Æthelflæd was a precious commodity. Her marriage to the much older Æthelred, who had served Alfred as a loyal lieutenant, bound together the English-speaking kingdoms of Wessex and the newly reclaimed Mercia. Theirs was an entirely political union, designed to strengthen the two kingdoms against Danish and Norwegian incursions in the north. She could have faded from the records at this point, content to support her husband within the court and bear him many offspring.

Yet Æthelflæd wasn't about to be overshadowed by her husband. Instead, records report that she was signing diplomatic



Our illustration shows a statue of Æthelflæd – erected in Tamworth to mark the 1,000th anniversary of her fortifying the town – along with other objects connected to her. These include (top right) a 14th-century miniature of her father, King Alfred the Great



Gloucester Cathedral rises above the ruins of St Oswald's Priory. Æthelflæd's patronage helped transform Gloucester from a derelict backwater to a thriving town, and she is now buried in the priory

documents and presiding over provincial courts in place of Æthelred. As he became increasingly ill she assumed more of his responsibilities, including arranging diplomatic agreements and refurbishing many of the towns. Concerned by the relocation of Viking settlers from the Irish coast to the north-west, Æthelflæd made two plans: on the one hand, she offered land for the Vikings to settle in the Wirral, and on the other instructed that the ancient Roman city of Chester be refortified in case they decided to press southwards into Mercia.

Her caution was rewarded when in that same year, 907, the Wirral Vikings attacked Chester but failed to breach its walls. Æthelflæd's reputation as a canny ruler extended, not only through the English-speaking world, but over the waters, reaching the ears of her Viking foes. She was developing a name as a keen diplomat, an engaged ruler and a military strategist.

### Divine favour

While Æthelred's health deteriorated, Æthelflæd took more responsibility for the military activities of Mercia. She understood the importance of aligning herself with other powerful rulers and supported her brother, Edward, in his reconquest of Mercian territories in the Danelaw.

When Æthelred died in 911, his wife was declared 'Lady of the Mercians' and took over control of the kingdom. In Wessex, the role of royal women was one of subservience: Æthelflæd's mother had only ever held the title of 'wife of the king' and signed no charters with her husband. Æthelflæd took advantage of a tradition that granted women in Mercia greater rights.

To secure power in Anglo-Saxon England, you first needed the support of 'ealdormen' (high-ranking royal officials). It is telling that, rather than hand the kingdom to a male heir or succumb to Wessex, the ealdormen of Mercia chose Æthelflæd as their leader.

## *Æthelflæd went on to secure some of the most significant victories in battle of the early 10th century*

Their choice was wise, since she secured some of the greatest victories in battle of the early 10th century. In 917 her troops reconquered the Viking city of Derby, a critical victory as this had been one of the 'Five Boroughs of the Danelaw'. The next year she secured Leicester, and from there made her way towards the prestigious Viking-held city of York. As the Danes were ready to offer her their submission, she died (possibly of dysentery) on 12 June 918 and was taken to be buried with her husband at St Oswald's Priory in Gloucester.

Securing the fealty of the Danes of York would have been Æthelflæd's ultimate achievement. Instead, it was the battle of Tettenhall (in modern-day Wolverhampton) eight years earlier in 910 that secured her image as victorious warrior queen. Back then, in retaliation for Æthelflæd and Edward's successful campaigns in the Danelaw, Viking troops had laid waste to large parts of Mercia, carrying off plunder and destroying the land. A joint Anglo-Saxon army headed them off at Tettenhall and massacred them there. Three Viking kings were reported to have been killed, and as a result, the image of Æthelflæd, warrior queen, bearing three royal swords was born.

As well as being a formidable warrior, Æthelflæd was also a shrewd ruler who set about extending the work of her father,

Alfred, by strengthening his fortifications at Tamworth, Stafford and Warwick. Many of these cities owe their existence to her efforts.

Like her father, she believed that the recently rejuvenated Anglo-Saxon kingdoms depended on the church and its divine favour to secure their reputation as worthy opponents to the Danish pagans. She invested in church buildings throughout Mercia, particularly in Gloucester, which she transformed from a derelict backwater to a vibrant town. She brought extra prestige to her newly founded church there by securing a most precious relic: the body of the kingly Saint Oswald. His relics had languished in Viking-held Bardney in Lincolnshire, but Æthelflæd managed to return them to Mercia. Their arrival was accompanied by lavish ceremonies, and the Mercian Register credits Æthelflæd with returning this holy royal saint to English-held land.

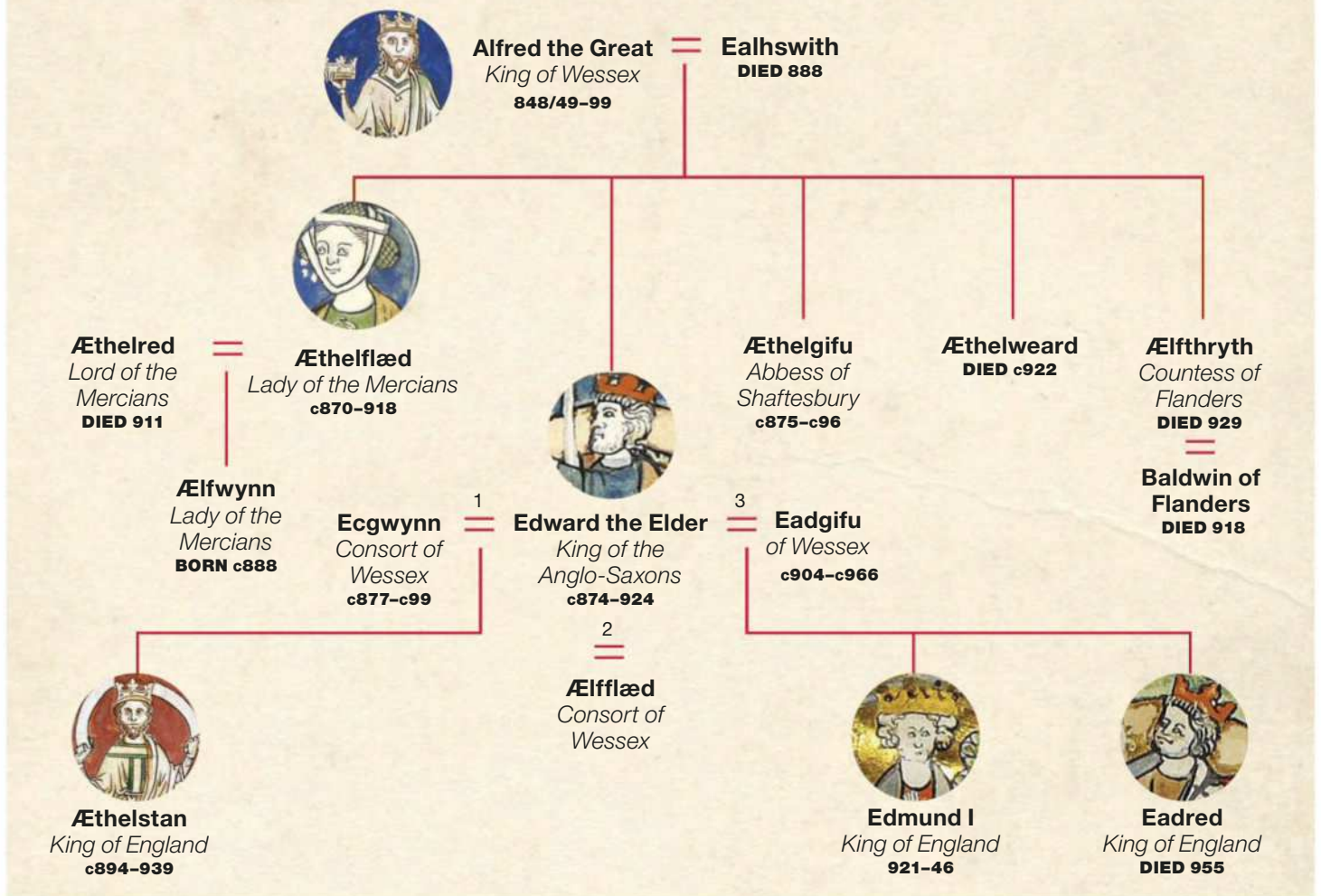
### Pleasure and pain

There is a wealth of evidence to support the contention that Mercia was a force to be reckoned with in the Anglo-Saxon period. Although difficult to date precisely, the Staffordshire Hoard (which in 2009 became the largest cache of Anglo-Saxon gold ever discovered) is testament to Mercian hegemony in the eighth century. The power of bishoprics, like that at Lichfield, is attested to in the remarkable Gospel Book that survives from there and in the carved angel discovered in 2003: just a fragment of what would have been a lush and vibrant environment. While other kingdoms were ravaged by Viking incursions in the ninth century, parts of Mercia, like Worcester, remained strong and affluent.

Æthelflæd, like her father, sought to strengthen the prestige of her kingdom by investing extensively in urban renewal, education (through the monasteries) and in the arts. She was also aware that her legacy would be protected by those who came after her. She ensured her daughter, Ælfwynn, would

# ENGLAND'S FIRST FAMILY

Æthelflæd was part of a dynasty that dominated Wessex and Mercia in the 9th and 10th centuries



succeed her, but also fostered her brother's son, who would become the great unifier of England, King Æthelstan.

Æthelflæd was not content to be simply a bearer of heirs. She gave her husband one daughter, but William of Malmesbury suggests she shied away from "marital obligations" because of the risks she knew it posed her life. He records that she declined to have sex after bearing a daughter because it was "unbecoming of the daughter of a king to give way to a delight which, after a time, produced such painful consequences".

## A celebrated reputation

Why do we not know more about Æthelflæd? For a start, it could be that her own brother had her largely written out of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle so as not to promote separatism between Wessex and Mercia. However, she maintained a celebrated reputation – particularly, and surprisingly, under the Normans – with chroniclers going out of their way to laud her military achievements.

Yet, in the end, it was Boudicca who would come to captivate as 'warrior woman' under

Elizabeth I, possibly because of their legendary shared red hair. Æthelflæd's name languished over the following centuries, but was revived in 1913 with a statue in Tamworth erected to commemorate her achievements. Even so, she would constantly pale next to the name of her father, Alfred the Great, who English historians continued to celebrate as scourge of the Danes and saviour of England.

It is only now, as we approach her 1,100-year anniversary, that Æthelflæd can take centre stage. Gloucester History Festival, of which I am president, has arranged talks, exhibitions and events to raise awareness of her place in England's history. A new biography by Tom Holland is imminent, and she will hopefully attract media attention over the coming year. But it is an unfortunate characteristic of historical studies that so many important individuals have been left unexamined, because they have not fitted into the cast of 'great white men'.

The tide is turning. Æthelflæd is as important now as she was more than a millennium ago. She is a rallying point to all those searching for strong female role

models. She was a product of her age, constrained by her time, yet she achieved so much. It is now that she should be remembered as mother, diplomat, warrior and queen. Now she should be celebrated in the words of William of Malmesbury, as a "woman of enlarged soul". **H**

Dr Janina Ramirez lectures in art history at Oxford University, is a BBC documentary maker and president of Gloucester History Festival. Her new book, *Riddle of the Runes: A Viking Mystery*, will be published by OUP on 1 July

## DISCOVER MORE

### LISTEN AGAIN

► To listen to BBC Radio 3's episode of **Anglo-Saxon Portraits** on Æthelflæd, go to: [bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pzhp](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pzhp)

### COLLECTOR'S EDITION

► Read more on Æthelflæd in our special edition, **The Story of the Vikings and Anglo-Saxons**. Order a copy for £9.99 at [buysubscriptions.com/saxons](http://buysubscriptions.com/saxons)



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MAGAZINE

# EUROPE'S APOCALYPSE

With more than 5 million dying in an orgy of violence between Protestants and Catholics, it's little wonder that the Thirty Years' War was remembered as the moment when God deserted Europe. On the 400th anniversary of its outbreak, we asked **Peter H Wilson** the most pressing questions on a 17th-century cataclysm

Pieter Molenaer's c1650 painting is thought to depict the siege of Magdeburg in 1631. As many as 20,000 of the city's inhabitants lost their lives when Catholic forces breached its walls, the bloody nadir of a conflict pockmarked by outbreaks of extreme violence

BRIDGEMAN



# The brutal Thirty Years' War

**Most modern histories of the Thirty Years' War portray it as an almost uniquely brutal conflict. Does it deserve this grim reputation?**

The Thirty Years' War claimed the lives of at least 5 million people – so, yes, its grim reputation is well deserved. In fact, the population of the Holy Roman Empire, the conflict's main theatre, did not recover its prewar levels until around 60 years after the war ended. Through a combination of plague, famine and violence, the conflict brought misery to people living across vast swathes of central Europe.

The violence was, in many ways, a product of the large numbers of actors involved in the conflict. Beginning in 1618, the Thirty Years' War was, at heart, a struggle for constitutional and religious power within the Holy Roman Empire – Europe's largest and most populous state. It pitted the Austrian Habsburg family and their predominately Catholic supporters against a number of Protestant states in an increasingly bitter conflagration that would pull in foreign powers such as Denmark, Sweden and France.

There were any number of examples of atrocities perpetrated during the war but surely the most terrible was the sack of the Protestant city of Magdeburg (in modern north-east Germany) on 20 May 1631. The bloodshed was the culmination of a seven-week siege of the city by Catholic forces under

a septuagenarian leader called Count Tilly. Tilly had repeatedly demanded Magdeburg's surrender – and its people had repeatedly refused. When his soldiers finally breached the walls and infiltrated the city, their revenge was terrible. By the end of the day only 200 of the 1,900 buildings remained undamaged. Around four-fifths of the city's 25,000 inhabitants were dead, many suffocated in their cellars as they hid from the shelling, fighting and plundering, but others cruelly murdered or dragged away by the victors.

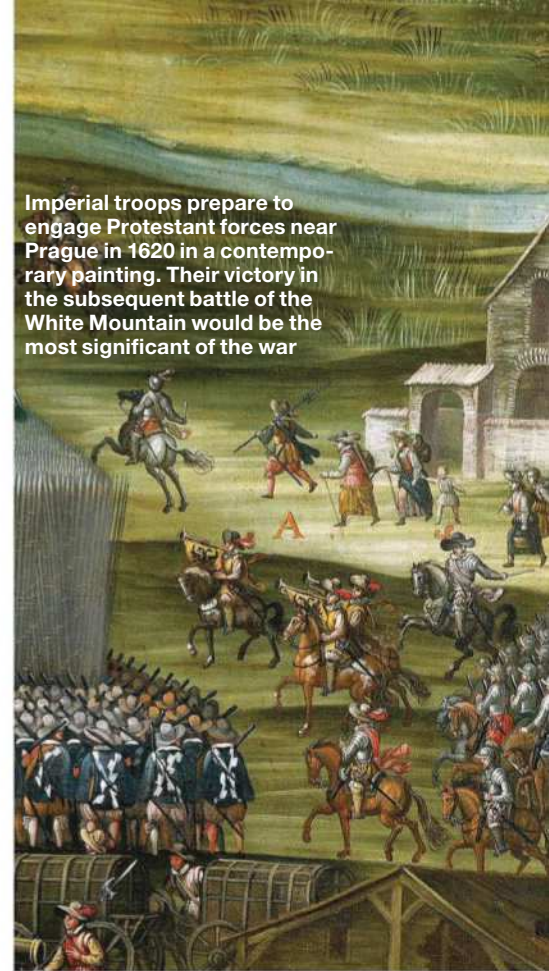
More than any other event, the sack of Magdeburg has come to epitomise the Thirty Years' War's reputation as an orgy of uncontrolled violence.

## What was the background to the conflict?

Unlike England, France or Spain, the Holy Roman Empire was governed as a 'mixed monarchy' in which the emperor shared power with around 60 princes, 140 counts and abbots, and 60 free cities.

The empire had long been dominated by the Habsburgs. Their hereditary principalities comprised a third of the empire, and the emperor had been chosen from their ranks since 1438. But during the 17th century, the Habsburgs were distracted by an internal family quarrel, as well as impending bankruptcy. This created a political vacuum, which was filled by the empire's second most powerful family, the Wittelsbachs.



Imperial troops prepare to engage Protestant forces near Prague in 1620 in a contemporary painting. Their victory in the subsequent battle of the White Mountain would be the most significant of the war



But there was another issue convulsing the empire – and that was the fall-out from the Reformation. Back in 1555, in the wake of this enormous rift in the established church, the empire's power brokers had reached a peace treaty (the so-called Peace of Augsburg) in a bid to defuse growing tensions between Catholics and Protestants.

## TIMELINE: THE HOLY WAR

How a religious dispute convulsed central Europe

1555	1608	1618	1619
<p><b>The Peace of Augsburg grants equal legal protection to Lutherans as well as Catholics in the Holy Roman Empire.</b> These rights extend to all the secular principalities, counties and cities, but the position of the individually small, but numerous church lands are unchanged.</p>	<p>A minority of <b>discontented princes – led by Frederick IV, the Elector Palatine – form the Protestant Union.</b> Duke Maximilian of Bavaria responds in 1609 with the Catholic League as imperial politics polarise over religious and constitutional issues.</p>	<p><b>In the so-called Defenestration of Prague,</b> a radical group of Bohemian Protestant nobles throw two councillors and a secretary out of the window of Prague Castle. They are denounced as rebels by the ruling Catholic Habsburgs. Both sides begin arming.</p>	<p><b>Ferdinand II becomes emperor</b> and is backed by Bavaria and Saxony, as well as Spanish and papal financial and military assistance. England, the Dutch Republic and others send money and volunteers but otherwise refuse to support the rebels who are decisively defeated at White Mountain (1620).</p>
	 <p><b>Frederick IV, one of the founders of the Protestant Union</b></p>	 <p><b>A contemporary engraving of Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II</b></p>	



One of the Peace of Augsburg's principal diktats was that lands comprising a seventh of the empire's territory should be reserved for Catholic rulers. By the early 17th century, many Protestants were claiming that this "ecclesiastical reservation" disadvantaged them politically, and frustrated their efforts to spread their faith.

It was now that the Palatines, the senior line in the Wittelsbach family, made their move. Spotting an opportunity to boost their power, they rallied a significant number of the Protestant princes and cities into a military alliance, called the Union. In response, Duke Maximilian of Bavaria rallied most of the Catholic princes in a rival alliance which was soon dubbed the Catholic League. Though many princes abstained from joining either organisation – and neither side possessed permanent armies – the stakes had been raised significantly.

### The Defenestration of Prague is often described as the event that triggered armed conflict. What happened here?

The Habsburgs viewed the Protestant Union as a direct challenge to their authority and, determined to defend their Catholic faith, began restricting court and military appointments to Catholics. This was too much for around 30 Bohemian Protestant nobles to stomach. On the back foot and, in some cases, having recently lost lucrative court jobs, they burst into the government offices in Prague Castle on 23 May 1618. Most of the councilors were absent, but two were quickly thrown out of the window, shortly followed by their secretary. Despite some injuries, all three survived the fall, and the secretary – who had, amazingly, landed on his feet – was able to escape to warn the authorities in Vienna.

## The Palatines had powerful supporters beyond the Holy Roman Empire – Denmark, Sweden and France – who all intervened in the war

The great irony of this incident is that, in 1618, neither side wanted war or had the means to fight. But following the Defenestration, they started arming and calling for support – a move that would have huge ramifications for the future of Europe.

### What impact did the personalities of the rival leaders have on the opening exchanges of the war?

A major one – especially in the case of Habsburg leader Ferdinand II, who was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1619. Ferdinand was a Catholic hardliner, who as a young man had refrained from drinking and, to quell carnal urges, wore a hairshirt prior to his marriage. He extended this severe attitude to his Protestant foes, interpreting the conflict as a rebellion rather than civil war. As rebels, his opponents had, he believed, forfeited their rights, and he felt free to

## 1623–29

Having defeated his opponents, Ferdinand redistributes their lands and titles to his supporters. **Denmark believes the changed political balance in the empire threatens its influence in northern Germany and so launches an invasion in 1625.** Imperial forces headed by Albrecht von Wallenstein defeat Denmark by 1629.

## 1629

Ferdinand secures lasting peace with Denmark through generous terms but overreaches himself in the empire by unilaterally issuing the Edict of Restitution, **imposing a narrowly Catholic interpretation of the Peace of Augsburg.**



Albrecht von Wallenstein, who led an imperial army against the Danes

## 1630

**Sweden sees Denmark's defeat as an opportunity** to expand its influence in the Baltic and to prevent Ferdinand from aiding Poland, its other long-standing enemy. The Swedish invasion restarts the war, but Gustavus Adolphus is unable to advance south.

## 1631

**The sack of Magdeburg by Count Tilly's troops** is exploited by Swedish propaganda, but it is not until after Gustavus's convincing victory at Breitenfeld that German Protestant princes join him, largely in the hope of conquering the Catholic church lands.



The Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus has been hailed as a Protestant hero

## 1635

Ferdinand capitalises on victory at Nördlingen in 1634 to make peace with Protestant principalities but his hardline Catholicism dissuades him from offering sufficient concessions to end the war. **France intervenes militarily to prevent Sweden's collapse.**

## 1643–48

Peace talks open in the Westphalian towns of Münster and Osnabrück in 1643, while each side fights on to improve its bargaining position. **The Peace of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years' War in 1648.**



A medal commemorating the Peace of Westphalia, which brought the Thirty Years' War to an end in 1648

# The brutal Thirty Years' War



A painting shows Protestant nobles throwing two councillors and a secretary out of a window of Prague Castle in May 1618. The so-called Defenestration of Prague was the spark that triggered the slide into open war

expropriate them once he had defeated them.

Ferdinand soon canvassed the support of Duke Maximilian of Bavaria and most of the Catholic ecclesiastical princes. Saxony, the most powerful of all the Protestant principalities, also sided with him because it feared that the Union would polarise imperial politics – proof that the two sides did not divide neatly along religious lines.

The Bohemian leadership, meanwhile, formally deposed the Habsburgs and elected Frederick of the Palatinate their king. Frederick was an ambitious, obstinate man, who was convinced by the righteousness of his cause and who had an unshakable belief in ultimate Protestant victory. Unfortunately, he was crowned under a new constitution that deprived the monarchy of most of its power. As he would discover when Ferdinand's forces fell upon his army at the battle of the White Mountain near Prague on 8 November 1620, he had been handed a poisoned chalice.

The battle of the White Mountain saw Ferdinand's army rout Frederick's Protestant coalition before sacking the Bohemian capital of Prague, the victorious troops breaking into homes and robbing with violence. "Those who have nothing, fear for their necks, and all regret not taking up arms and fighting to the last man," was a contemporary Berlin

newspaper's take on events.

The Habsburgs claimed the White Mountain as a victory for progress; for the Czechs, it ushered in an 'age of darkness'. Either way, Ferdinand had secured the most important victory of the entire conflict. With his enemy Frederick fleeing to the Dutch Republic, he was now in a dominant position.

## What was the conflict like for civilians living in the warzone?

From the massacre of up to 2,000 residents of the town of Münden in Lower Saxony by Catholic forces, to the killing of 154 civilians in Landsberg on the Lech (modern-day south Germany) by Swedes, the Thirty Years' War was pockmarked by extreme violence against innocent men, women and children.

It's little wonder, then, that fear is the emotion that leaps out of the pages of contemporary letters and diaries. All were desperate for news and expressed a heavy sense of dread at reports of troops heading in their direction. Maria Anna Junius, a Dominican nun living in a convent on the outskirts of Bamberg – whose father had been executed during the conflict – was one of many to wrestle with the dilemma of whether to flee from advancing Swedish troops. She'd heard of blood flowing down the walls of

neighbouring Würzburg, and writes of not being able to sleep for "great fear and anxiety" when the soldiers helped themselves to vegetables in the convent garden.

Virtually any idea that anyone might have had initially that this was a war of religion disappeared once they encountered soldiers who usually behaved equally badly, regardless of which faith they espoused or prince they served. Why was their behaviour so appalling? Primarily because none of the belligerents could pay their soldiers properly, forcing them to live off the land. The war became a constant struggle for survival – especially once it became general across the empire after 1631 – and most commanders were simply unable to curb their troops' plundering.

The bloodshed, the perpetual fear, the chronic instability manifested itself in other ways. In the Mecklenburg region of northern Germany, entire populations fled to the woods, marshes or lakes. The population of Strasbourg doubled to 60,000 in March 1636 as refugees flooded into the city to escape the carnage. Meanwhile, fear of witchcraft surged in the early 17th century (three escalating waves of persecution in Bamberg probably claimed a thousand victims).

The perception of the Thirty Years' War as a time of relentless, random slaughter was

fostered at the time by the authorities themselves, who presented the war as a divine punishment for the population's sins. It therefore entered the popular memory as something truly awful that must never be allowed to return.

#### Why did the war drag on for 30 years?

Ferdinand's refusal to offer sufficient concessions to his vanquished foes certainly contributed to the war's longevity. Within a few months of the battle of the White Mountain, the Holy Roman Emperor had seized rebel properties amounting to around half of all landed estates in Bohemia and redistributed these to his supporters. He would repeat this practice with every successive imperial victory.

The trouble was, the defeated Palatines had powerful supporters beyond the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire. Provoked by Ferdinand's land grabs – and acting out of naked opportunism – they intervened in the Thirty Years' War in succession. First Denmark from 1625–29; then Sweden from 1630; and finally France after 1635.

Of these, the Swedish intervention, led by Gustavus Adolphus, is surely the best known. Gustavus is one of the most charismatic figures of the 17th century, whom later generations have, with considerable exaggeration, celebrated as a brilliant military innovator. The British military theorist BH Liddell Hart even called him the “founder of modern war”. Such awe is, in no small part, due to his exploits at the battle of Breitenfeld in 1631 when his Protestant army inflicted the first major defeat on Catholic forces in the entire war. It truly was a spectacular victory. But when Gustavus was killed in the battle of Lützen the following year, Sweden found itself mired in a seemingly unwinnable war.

Both the emperor and Sweden sustained their war effort by distributing captured land to their German supporters. This added to the difficulties of peacemaking, because neither party felt able to compel their allies to return these gains as part of some compromise peace, yet neither side was strong enough to secure the outright victory needed to dictate terms. So the war continued.

#### Did the Thirty Years' War have much of an impact on Britain?

Britain's Stuart monarchy was indirectly involved in the conflict – principally because Frederick was married to Elizabeth, daughter of James VI and I of Scotland and England. When Frederick accepted the Bohemian rebels' offer of their kingdom's crown, the

## Fear leaps out of the pages of letters and diaries. All expressed a heavy sense of dread at reports of troops heading in their direction

couple expected James to back them to the hilt. But the Stuart king – who had declared himself “most afflicted” when his son-in-law failed to ask his advice before accepting the rebels' offer – refused.

This was a hugely controversial decision – one that would have bloody consequences for the British Isles later in the century. Huge numbers of James's subjects – many of whom looked back nostalgically to the ‘golden era’ of Elizabeth I's reign when the English stood up to the Spanish Armada – were enraged by their king's decision not to back the ‘Protestant Cause’. The Stuarts' inability to do anything meaningful to restore Frederick and Elizabeth became one of the many popular grudges against their rule that erupted in Britain's own ruinous civil war.

This disaffection with James's refusal to help is reflected in the number of Britons – around 113,000 – who joined anti-Habsburg armies during the Thirty Years' War, notably those of Denmark and Sweden.

#### Why did the Thirty Years' War finally come to an end?

The war did *not* end through mutual exhaustion, as is widely thought – France and Spain were able to continue their own, separate conflict for another 11 years! The simple answer is that the key belligerents all came to believe that continued fighting endangered the gains they had already made, and that it was better to settle for these and to end the destruction.

A turning point came in February 1637, when the intransigent Ferdinand II died and was replaced by his son, also called Ferdinand. Ferdinand III was more moderate and willing to compromise than his father. By the early 1640s, the fighting was increasingly centred on securing local advantages intended to strengthen each party's bargaining position. What's more, by 1645 it had become obvious that the tide of the war had shifted significantly against the Habsburgs – and the pragmatic Ferdinand III made sufficient concessions to persuade France and Sweden

to negotiate. The result was the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the conflict in 1648.

#### What were the main legacies of the Thirty Years' War?

The Peace of Westphalia defused religion's potential to polarise politics. The imperial constitution was adjusted, for instance by granting Calvinists equal rights with Catholics and Lutherans. But the most significant change was to entangle the new rights so deeply in the empire's legal structure that disputes now focused on local problems, rather than big, abstract questions. It was now much more difficult to polarise opinion along religious lines – as Frederick the Great found during the Seven Years' War (1756–63) when few believed his claims that it was a struggle between Protestants and Catholics, rather than between Prussia and Austria.

In other respects the war was truly a disaster. Large swathes of the empire remained wasteland for decades, pockmarked by burned-out farms and hamlets. Some areas recovered quickly, as did some economic sectors like brewing, since grain was easier to cultivate than grapes, where vineyards had been destroyed. The loss of population also created opportunities for the survivors; for example, land prices crashed, while wages rose. But the overall impression remained one of misery, reinforced by poets and writers who wrote of the “tears of the fatherland”, and a once-flourishing land left waste.

The war occupies a place in German and Czech history similar to that of the civil wars in Britain, Spain and the United States, and the revolutions in France and Russia: a defining moment of national trauma. For most Germans, the war came to symbolise national humiliation, condemning their country to two centuries of internal division and international impotence. It truly was a European apocalypse. **II**

**Peter H Wilson** is Chichele professor of the history of war, University of Oxford. His latest book is *Lützen* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

#### DISCOVER MORE

##### BOOK

► **Europe's Tragedy: A New History of the Thirty Years War** by Peter H Wilson (Penguin, 2010)

##### LISTEN AGAIN

► Misha Glenny explored the Thirty Years' War in the opening episode of Radio 4's **The Invention of Germany**. To listen again go to [bbc.co.uk/programmes/b015c342](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b015c342)





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## OUR FIRST WORLD WAR

# Repairing trenches and holding firm

In part 49 of his personal testimony series, **Peter Hart** reaches June 1918, when the threat from the German Spring Offensive is beginning to recede, but tensions between the exhausted Allied armies are starting to surface. Peter is tracing the experiences of 20 people who lived through the First World War – via interviews, letters and diary entries – as its centenary progresses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES ALBON



## Harold Hayward

Born in 1897 in Alcester, Harold signed up with the 12th Gloucestershire Regiment, fighting on the western front in November 1915. He was injured at the Somme in September 1916 but recovered and returned to the lines, now as an officer.

**Newly commissioned Second Lieutenant Harold Hayward was serving with the 15th Welch (Carmarthenshire) Regiment in June 1918. He had served in the ranks himself earlier in the war and knew how important it was to establish a strong relationship with his men.**

“I was not Welsh and of course that was a slight barrier – that I didn’t speak with a Welsh accent, which they all did. I had known what it was to be addressed as, “Hey you!” so I wrote down all their names and if possible all their nicknames – the sergeant, then the four corporals, the lance corporals and then the men – so that when I addressed them, at least I used their names. It makes a heck of

a lot of difference, instead of, “You, you and you!” After a while, having censored their letters, I got to know something about each man. I knew how to treat one man a little differently from another and I never had to put anyone on a crime sheet.

The officers lived a different life from their men. I shared a dugout with the other officers of the company. Two of us were out on duty while the other two were trying to get some sleep. There was a rough wooden bed on which you lay, instead of lying

on mud. Then of course we were fed a little differently. We had our own officers’ batmen who acted as our cooks – so I had things a bit nicer than I did out in the trenches as a man. My batman was Jones. He was old enough to be my father! In a sense he treated me as his son. I couldn’t want anything done that he wouldn’t do – anything.

**Hayward was appointed battalion works officer.**

“My job was to go around the trenches. If they were in anyway knocked about and not first class defensive positions, then I had to take out a company at night and get it repaired. I wasn’t very popular! Nobody had a good word. They could be sitting down playing cards, I had to take them out with me. I had to detail what these chaps had to

***“If the trenches were knocked about, I had to take out a company at night and get it repaired. I wasn’t very popular!”***

dig. The commander Royal Engineers said: “We must have another communication trench. It will be a 1,000 yards long from the front line, right the way through support and reserve lines, back into the quiet country.” It was for me to have that dug. I had to pace it out. Every man had to do two nights and there was underground grumbling all the time. I heard a lot of back-slang about it. I thought: “What can I do? Well now, I’ll go and see the colonel.”

I said: “Now, colonel, do you mind, could you approach the general and ask that this trench should be called Carmarthen Trench?” The day that we were going to come out of that sector he said: “Division have said you can call it Carmarthen Trench.” I had already got little labels painted up and before the first man of the battalion coming out of the line, I got one of these about every 200 yards. The chaps came along, “Carmarthen! Carmarthen!”

**His reputation was restored.**

Steel wire for making barbed wire, an essential defensive barricade in the trenches. It was repaired and replaced by soldiers from the trenches at night





## Joseph Murray

Joe grew up in a County Durham mining community. He served at Gallipoli with the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division, but was wounded in 1917 and evacuated back to England.

**Ordinary Seaman Joseph Murray had lost his leading seaman status on leaving front line service. His wounded wrist was still giving him trouble and he was sent to Milford Haven on light duties with the naval police.**

“I was given lodgings at the Sailors’ Home, Milford Haven. I had a civilian suit, walking stick, umbrella and bowler hat! You ought to see me in a bowler hat! When the war began, the Belgian fishermen with their trawlers fled to England. They employed lots of them at Milford Haven. All the fish was sold on the quayside and it appeared that the fishermen were complaining about not getting enough pay. They sent us naval police down there.

There was one main gate – up comes a lorry, “Hello!” They’d go into the office and hand in a chit. “Please allow the bearer to pass with three stone of hake, haddock and so on.” “All right!” And off they used to go. We let several go and then my mate Hayes and I decided to have a check. The bloke got in the lorry cab and drove up towards the gate – soon as he handed in his chit. “Whooh! Stop there!” Hayes went in front, so they couldn’t move; I opened the back and we find that there was four times as much fish as there was on the chit! The fishermen were paid by the chit and not by fish. They were rumbled.



## Sir Douglas Haig

Haig was commander of the British Expeditionary Force on the western front. He had spent the past few months trying to cope with the German Spring Offensive.

**In June 1918, Haig was still under incredible pressure. The German threat had receded, but Allied relations were growing fractious.**

“Losses of our five divisions in the Aisne battle amount to 24,414. One division has had three French divisions relieved on each side of it since it went into battle. Our troops are being used up to the last man in order to give the French courage and fight! Hamilton Gordon commanding our IX Corps gives a dismal picture of the French troops. But this I knew in August 1914; the Somme battle confirmed my view that much of the French good name was the result of newspaper puffs! Now, when the result of the war depends on their ‘fighting spirit’, many of their divisions won’t face the enemy.

**Such criticism was unfair, but not uncommon during a stressful battle for survival. II**

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum

### DISCOVER MORE

#### WEBSITE

► You can read more articles on the **First World War** at *BBC History Magazine*’s website: [historyextra.com](http://historyextra.com)

#### TV AND RADIO

► The BBC’s **First World War** coverage is continuing. You can find regular TV and radio updates at [historyextra.com](http://historyextra.com)



## Kate Luard

Londoner Kate, born in 1872, trained as a nurse. On the western front she rose to head sister, in charge of a staff of up to 40 nurses and 100 orderlies.

**Even times of war can throw up days that are almost perfect. For Sister Kate Luard, serving with 41st Casualty Clearing Station, Saturday 16 June was just such a day.**

“I suppose you’ve had the same heavenly mornings we’ve had. We emerge about 7.30 from our dugouts, to a loud continuous chorus of larks singing their *Te Deum*, and also to the hum and buzz of whole squadrons of aeroplanes keeping marvellous V formations against the dazzling blue and white of the

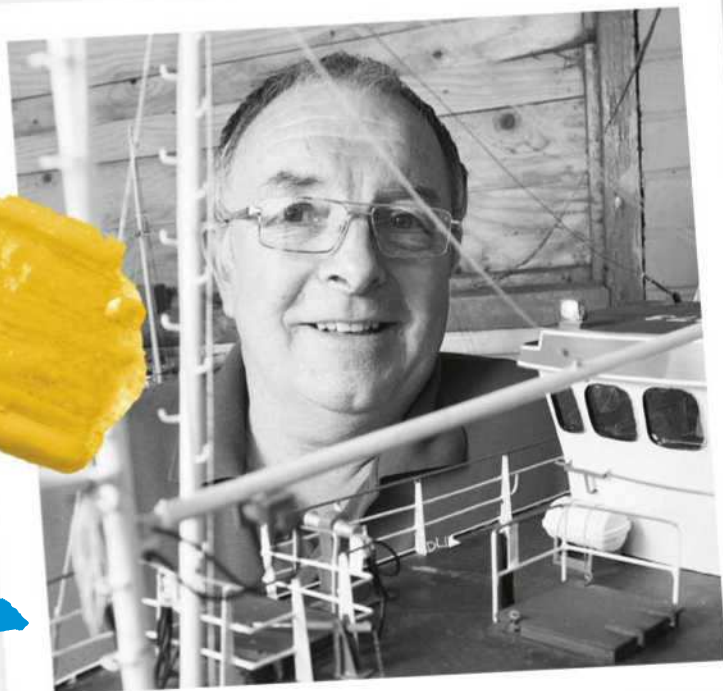
sky. The hills are covered with waving corn, like watered silk in the wind, with deep crimson clover, and with fields of huge oxeye daisies, like moving sheets. Today there is no sound of guns and it is all peace and loveliness.

**Then there were days that threw up stressful challenges.**

“I’ve had a mild go of flu, but haven’t knocked off for it and am now better. Jerry comes every night again and drops below the barrage, seeking whom he may devour. I think he gets low enough to see our huge Red Cross, as even when some of our lads butt in and engage him with their machine guns, he hasn’t dropped anything on us, though there is lively scrapping overhead.

It is interesting but too critical to be amusing. A man has had his left arm and left leg off today – they seldom recover. A boy the other day had to have his second leg off and died the same night. He had been craving for strawberries, and by great luck we got some for him the day before.

**NEXT TIME:** “I staggered across the room, pulled him up and danced with him for three hours”



# Arthur strikes back

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# FESTIVAL GUIDE

**BBC** **HiSTORY**  
MAGAZINE



*BBC History Magazine's*

# History Weekends 2018



## Winchester

**5-7 October**

The Great Hall and  
Ashburton Hall, Elizabeth II Court



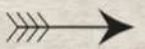
## York

**19-21 October**

Yorkshire Museum and  
King's Manor

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this year's exciting line-up



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# WINCHESTER

## Friday 5 October

### Great Hall

### Elizabeth II Court

10.00



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16.00–17.00  
**Diarmaid MacCulloch**  
Thomas Cromwell: A Life

16.30

17.00

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18.00–19.00  
**Helen Castor**  
Elizabeth I:  
A Study in Insecurity

18.30

19.00

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20.00–21.00  
**Neil MacGregor**  
Living with the Gods

20.30

21.00

21.30



18.00–19.00  
**Alexandra Churchill**  
George V: A King at War  
and the Making of the  
House of Windsor

20.00–21.00  
**Kate Williams**  
Blood, Betrayal and  
Mary, Queen of Scots

## Saturday 6 October

### Great Hall

### Elizabeth II Court

10.00–11.00

**Michael Hicks**  
Richard III: Foresight  
and Strategy

11.30–12.30

**Alison Weir**  
Jane Seymour:  
The Haunted Queen

13.30–14.30

**Suzannah Lipscomb**  
Witchcraft

15.00–16.00

**Marc Morris**  
Castles in Britain,  
1066–1500

16.30–17.30

**Lucy Worsley**  
Queen Victoria: Daughter,  
Wife, Mother, Widow

18.00–19.00

**Speaker to be  
confirmed**

19.30–20.30

**Tracy Borman**  
James I and the  
Gunpowder Plot

21.00–22.00

**Bernard Cornwell**  
In Conversation on the  
Making of England

10.00–11.00

**Ellie Woodacre**  
Medieval Queens: Ruling  
Women in a 'Man's World'

11.30–12.30

**Sarah Churchwell**  
The Dark Story of  
America First

13.30–14.30

**Fern Riddell**  
Activist. Arsonist.  
Suffragette: The Life of  
Kitty Marion

15.00–16.00

**Ryan Lavelle**  
The Death of Cnut the  
Great and the End of  
the Viking Empire

16.30–17.30

**Guy de la Bédoyère**  
Domina: The Women Who  
Made Imperial Rome

18.00–19.00

**Max Hastings**  
Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy  
1945–1975

19.30–20.30

**Sam Willis and  
James Daybell**  
Histories of the Unexpected

You'll find a list of ticket prices – plus a full rundown of the programme and speaker details – at [historyweekend.com](http://historyweekend.com)



## Sunday 7 October

Great Hall	Elizabeth II Court	
		10.00
10.30–11.30 <b>Catherine Nall</b> 'A Manifest Miracle of God': Henry IV and the Deposition of Richard II	10.30–11.30 <b>Olivette Otele</b> How Africans Changed Early Modern Europe	10.30
		11.00
		11.30
12.00–13.00 <b>Ruth Goodman</b> How to Behave Badly in Renaissance Britain	12.00–13.00 <b>Nicola Tallis</b> Elizabeth's Rival: The Tumultuous Tale of Lettice Knollys, Countess of Leicester	12.00
		12.30
		13.00
		13.30
14.00–15.00 <b>Michael Wood</b> The Trojan War: Myth or History?	14.00–15.00 <b>James Holland</b> Big Week: The Biggest Air Battle of the Second World War	14.00
		14.30
		15.00
15.30–16.30 <b>Andrew Roberts</b> Churchill: Walking with Destiny	15.30–16.30 <b>George Goodwin</b> Towton 1461: The First War of the Roses and England's Bloodiest Battle	15.30
		16.00
		16.30
17.00–18.00 <b>Nicholas Vincent</b> King John: The Worst of Kings	17.00–18.00 <b>Lauren Mackay</b> Among the Wolves of Court: The Untold Story of Thomas and George Boleyn	17.00
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## Highlights of the History Weekend in Winchester

A selection of Britain's finest popular and academic historians will be descending on Winchester as we return to the city for the third time.



Among the highlights of our 2018 weekend, we are delighted to be welcoming the historian, author and broadcaster **Lucy Worsley** (left) for her first appearance at one of our events. She'll be exploring the life of

Queen Victoria, the subject of her forthcoming biography, which she'll be signing copies of after her talk. Another major new face for 2018 is **Neil MacGregor** (right), the former director of the British Museum, who presented the groundbreaking *History of the World in 100 Objects* on BBC Radio 4. He will be discussing the subject of his most recent book and radio series: the history of religion. **Ruth Goodman** will be making her History Weekend debut at Winchester too. The much-loved history author and broadcaster will be



on hand to offer an entertaining perspective on early modern bad behaviour. And fans of historical fiction will be sure to want to catch the in-conversation session with **Bernard Cornwell** (left), whose bestselling books include the *Sharpe* and *Last Kingdom* series.

This year also sees the return of some past favourites, including **Suzannah Lipscomb** who will be delving into the dark history of witchcraft. Meanwhile, our monthly columnist and one of the greatest names in popular history, **Michael Wood** (right), will be appearing again to tackle one of his favourite topics, the Trojan War.



As these highlights indicate, this year's weekend features a broad range of topics to suit every taste. From **Marc Morris** on British castles, to **Alexandra Churchill** (left) on George V and **Max Hastings** on the Vietnam War, there is a world of history to discover.



# YORK

## Friday 19 October

### Yorkshire Museum

### King's Manor

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17.00–18.00  
**Emma Wells**  
Faulty Towers or Heaven on Earth?: How to Build a Cathedral Like York Minster

19.00–20.00  
**Nicholas Vincent**  
King John: The Worst of Kings

20.30–21.30  
**Ian Kershaw**  
A Personalised History of the Fall of the Berlin Wall

19.00–20.00  
**Pragya Vohra**  
Cnut: England's Viking King

20.30–21.30  
**John Cooper**  
The Elizabethan Secret Service: Queenship, Conspiracy and Plot in Tudor England

## Saturday 20 October

### Yorkshire Museum

### King's Manor

10.00–11.00

**Lauren Mackay**  
Among the Wolves of Court: The Untold Story of Thomas and George Boleyn

11.40–12.40

**Kate Williams**  
Blood, Betrayal and Mary, Queen of Scots

14.00–15.00

**Tracy Borman**  
Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him

15.40–16.40

**Helen Castor**  
Elizabeth I: A Study in Insecurity

17.20–18.20

**Alison Weir**  
Jane Seymour: The Haunted Queen

18.50–19.50

**Nicola Tallis**  
Elizabeth's Rival: The Tumultuous Tale of Lettice Knollys, Countess of Leicester

20.30–21.30

**Sam Willis and James Daybell**  
Histories of the Unexpected

10.00–11.00

**Joyce Tyldesley**  
Nefertiti's Face: The Creation of an Icon

11.40–12.40

**Fern Riddell**  
Activist. Arsonist. Suffragette: The Life of Kitty Marion

14.00–15.00

**Levi Roach**  
Unready for Rule?: King Æthelred and the Vikings Revisited

15.40–16.40

**Henry Hemming**  
The Real M: MI5's Greatest Spymaster

17.20–18.20

**Max Adams**  
King Alfred's Britain: War and Peace in the Viking Age

18.50–19.50

**Gale Owen-Crocker**  
The Significance of the Bayeux Tapestry

You'll find a list of ticket prices – plus a full rundown of the programme and speaker details – at [historyweekend.com](http://historyweekend.com)



## Sunday 21 October

Yorkshire Museum	King's Manor	
		10.00
10.30–11.30 <b>Marc Morris</b> Castles in Britain, 1066–1500	10.30–11.30 <b>Sanjoy Bhattacharya</b> Can History Make Us Healthy?: Fighting Disease After World War Two	10.30
		11.00
		11.30
12.00–13.00 <b>Diane Atkinson</b> Rise Up, Women! The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes	12.00–13.00 <b>David Reynolds</b> The Kremlin Letters: Churchill, Stalin and FDR's Wartime Correspondence	12.00
		12.30
		13.00
		13.30
14.00–15.00 <b>Andrew Roberts</b> Churchill: Walking with Destiny	14.00–15.00 <b>Helen Rappaport</b> How Europe Failed the Romans	14.00
		14.30
		15.00
		15.30
15.40–16.40 <b>Michael Wood</b> The Trojan War: Myth or History?	15.40–16.40 <b>Catherine Nall</b> 'A Manifest Miracle of God': Henry IV and the Deposition of Richard II	16.00
		16.30
		17.00
17.10–18.10 <b>Nick Barratt</b> The Restless Kings: Henry II, his Sons, and the Wars for the Plantagenet Crown	17.10–18.10 <b>Alexandra Churchill</b> George V: A King at War and the Making of the House of Windsor	17.30
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		21.30

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## Highlights of the History Weekend in York

For our fourth weekend in York, you will be able to experience more than 3,000 years of history in a range of talks that covers everything from ancient Egypt to the end of the Cold War.

One of our speakers who needs little introduction is **Ian Kershaw** (right), the historian whose two-part biography of Hitler remains the defining work on the Nazi leader. He will be headlining on the Friday night, with a very personal take on another



dramatic moment in German history: the

fall of the Berlin Wall. A second speaker who will be familiar to many of you is **Andrew Roberts** (left), whose forthcoming major new life of Winston Churchill forms the basis of his talk.



This year has witnessed the centenary of some women being granted the vote in Britain and two of our speakers at York will be offering their perspectives on the history of the suffrage campaign.

**Diane Atkinson** will be delving into the dramatic lives of the suffragettes, while **Fern Riddell** (right) will argue that some of their number crossed the line into terrorism.



The city of York is of course infused with history and many of our speakers will be exploring topics of particular relevance to the setting. In her talk to open proceedings, **Emma Wells** will reveal some of the

secrets of the creation of one of Britain's greatest cathedrals: York Minster. And then the Vikings, who are so intertwined with York's past, will be covered in depth through talks by **Levi Roach, Max Adams** and



**Pragya Vohra** (left).

With other highlights including **Helen Castor** on Elizabeth I's inner psyche, **Alison Weir** on Jane Seymour and **Gale Owen-Crocker** (right) on the Bayeux Tapestry, there is plenty for you to get excited about at our 2018 York History Weekend.



# THE FESTIVAL



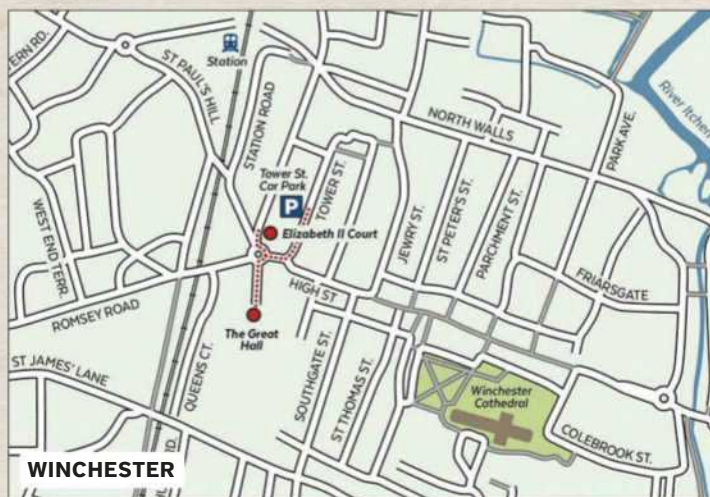
You'll find a list of ticket prices – plus a full rundown of the programme and speaker details – at [historyweekend.com](http://historyweekend.com)

## Winchester

**Date:** 5-7 October

**Where:** The historic Great Hall and Ashburton Hall in the nearby Elizabeth II Court. They are located in the centre of Winchester, a short walk from the town's train station. Both venues accommodate people with disabilities. Please let us know of any access requirements when booking tickets.

**What's on:** Thirty speakers over three days, plus book-signings, free History Fringe talks and a fully stocked WHSmith bookshop.



## How to book your tickets

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## York

**Date:** 19-21 October

**Where:** The newly refurbished Yorkshire Museum and the stunning King's Manor, which is close-by. Both venues are situated in central York, a 10-15 minute walk from the train station. Both venues accommodate people with disabilities. Please let us know of any access requirements when booking tickets.

**What's on:** More than 25 speakers, plus book-signings, free History Fringe talks and a fully stocked WHSmith bookshop.



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A c1536 portrait of Jane Seymour by Hans Holbein the Younger. "Jane's marriage to Henry VIII lasted less than 18 months, and yet she was witness to some of the most turbulent events of his reign," says Alison Weir



**INTERVIEW**  
**ALISON WEIR ON JANE SEYMOUR**

*"Jane had the courage to stand up for what she cared about"*

*Alison Weir speaks to Ellie Cawthorne about her latest historical novel, which offers a new take on Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour*



## PROFILE ALISON WEIR

A bestselling historian and historical novelist, Alison Weir specialises in England's Tudor and medieval royalty. She has sold more than 2.7 million fiction and non-fiction books worldwide, and is currently writing a series of six historical novels focusing on the wives of King Henry VIII.

### Your new book recounts the life of Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour. What makes her such an interesting character study?

Jane is an enigma and I've always found enigmas fascinating. It's very difficult to get a handle on her character and people have very polarised views about her. Was she the meek and compliant young tool of her ambitious family and an ardent king? Or was she a scheming little conniver who plotted to bring down her predecessor, Anne Boleyn?

I did a forensic analysis of the sources in order to try and decipher her character, and it's that analysis that underpins the novel.

### What did you uncover about Jane?

We can learn about Jane from many sources, notably the letters and papers of Henry VIII, and reports of foreign ambassadors. Then, of course, there are her actions themselves. From all of that, we can deduce quite a lot about her. We can infer that she was a person of some principle, who had the courage to stand up for the things she really cared about. This saw her challenge the king on two notable occasions.

Firstly, Jane helped reunite Henry with his eldest daughter, Mary, who had been declared a bastard when Henry divorced her mother, Catherine of Aragon. She had sided with her mother and the old Catholic order, and as the king was pushing through the Reformation, Mary was banished from court. Jane was staunchly Catholic and had served Catherine of Aragon, so she stood up for Mary and persuaded Henry to receive his daughter back into his affections. It's clear from the sources that Jane's influence was considerable in this matter.

Later on, Jane became aware that there was a groundswell of opinion – particularly in the Catholic north – against Henry's dissolution of the monasteries. She herself was also grieved to see these ancient institutions closing down. So she went on her knees before the king and begged him to spare the monasteries. This time, however, she received a brutal rebuttal. Henry told her that his last wife had died because she meddled too much in politics and Jane never interfered again.

### So Jane wasn't just passive and demure, as is often believed?

As those two incidents show, she certainly

had a great deal of moral courage. And she was definitely involved in the faction at court that plotted to bring down her predecessor and former mistress, Anne Boleyn. As a loyal supporter of Catherine of Aragon, Jane probably did not recognise Henry's marriage to Anne as legitimate, and we know that she agreed to drip-feed criticism of Anne into the king's ear. However, that doesn't mean that she actually connived at Anne's arrest and execution. Jane was probably hoping for Anne and Henry's marriage to be annulled. I think that Anne's horrible fate probably came as a surprise to her.

### How turbulent was the period of English history in which Jane was married to Henry?

Jane's marriage to Henry really wasn't that long – less than 18 months, and yet she was witness to some of the most turbulent events of his reign. The couple married in 1536, which was a pivotal year in the Tudor period. As well as seeing Anne's downfall and execution, it saw the beginning of the dissolution of the monasteries, and an outbreak of plague in London, which both Henry and Jane were horribly afraid of. Then in the autumn, the Pilgrimage of Grace – a major rebellion against the religious upheavals Henry had brought about – broke out in the Catholic north. This was very threatening to the king, who suppressed it with great ruthlessness. Jane lived through all this.

### What motivated Jane? Was she interested in power, or pushed to the throne by forces beyond her control?

Given Jane's background, I think she was probably swept along by it all. She was the daughter of a country knight, John Seymour of Wolf Hall in Wiltshire, and was a dutiful, obedient daughter. She had very ambitious

brothers, who forged their own paths at court – two eventually ended up on the executioner's block. Strangely, not much effort seems to have been made to find a husband for her, and by the time she caught the king's eye, she was heading into her late 20s. I think that his interest in her must have come as something of a surprise, and she was probably overawed by him. Since Jane was known to be quiet and gentle, I think she would have felt she had no choice.

Once queen, she would have been very aware of the precariousness of her new position. If you became queen 11 days after the execution of your predecessor and your new husband had a reputation for beheading those who opposed him, I think you'd feel a little trepidation.

### What was Henry VIII like at this time?

By 1536, the king had become a very frustrated, embittered man. He had been denied the one thing he really needed to ensure the security of his kingdom and continuance of his dynasty: a male heir. Aged 45, he had broken with Rome and pushed England to the brink of religious revolution. But ultimately, he had no heir to show for it.

The Henry that Jane married was irascible and bad tempered, yet oddly sentimental and increasingly sanctimonious. He was becoming the figure we all recognise from Holbein's famous imposing portrait. This was a man who was very autocratic – his word was law. His marriage to Jane was the beginning of the decline. A once-great sportsman, he was now suffering from a lasting leg injury, and between 1536 and 1540 he gained 17 inches round the waist.

### Can you tell us about Jane's relationship with Henry?

Shortly after their marriage, Henry made a joke that he'd seen two other ladies he preferred, but all the other evidence suggests that he really did love Jane. He certainly pursued her. We have a letter from Henry written in the style of courtly love that was prevalent then, and he does seem to have thought highly of Jane and respected her. It doesn't seem to have been a passionate, all-consuming love like he shared with Anne, but he was more secretive by this stage and their relationship developed over a much shorter time. In many ways, Jane was

*"If you became queen 11 days after the execution of your predecessor, I think you'd feel trepidation"*



Henry, Jane and their son – the future Edward VI – sit at the centre of a family portrait painted in c1545, eight years after Jane's death following childbirth

appealing to Henry precisely because she was the complete antithesis of Anne. She was a gentle influence and he could find some calm with her.

He was certainly consumed by great sorrow after Jane's death. In a letter to Thomas Cromwell written shortly afterwards, the Duke of Norfolk describes the king as "in great heaviness" during his wife's sickness. Henry had an almost pathological fear of illness and death, yet he stayed by Jane's bedside in a desperate state. Afterwards, he shut himself away at Windsor and refused to see anyone, even his ministers. However, I should add that within a month he was "framing his mind" – reluctantly – to think about a fourth marriage.

### You explore the controversial possibility that Jane may have been pregnant at the time of her marriage but had a miscarriage.

It's a theory built on a multitude of fragments of evidence, which I've explored in the novel for dramatic purposes. Firstly, the king talked about a prince being "expected in due season". There was also a long gap between Jane's marriage and the time that she conceived Edward VI in 1537. A report from

the imperial ambassador in Rome claims she was five months gone with child when she married and a slander reported in the English papers claimed that she was "made sure unto the king" [meaning they had slept together] six months before they wed. Whether or not this was true, Anne Boleyn was certainly very wary of Jane when she was queen. Lots of sources tell us that there were scratches and blows between the pair. It was a queen's privilege to physically chastise her maids, and from what we know about both of their characters, I don't think it was Jane doing the scratching.

### You consulted medical experts over Jane's cause of death - what conclusions did you come to?

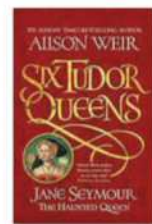
It's traditionally been believed that Jane died of puerperal fever following childbirth. She gave the king his son and died 12 days later. But there was something odd about the chronology of the sources, so I took a closer look. I found out that Jane bore Edward on the Friday, but she didn't fall ill until the Tuesday. There is no mention of fever in the sources, only a "natural lax" – or severe diarrhoea. There was a report that suggested that those around her "suffered her to take

great cold" and gave her unsuitable foods. That doesn't sound like puerperal fever.

So I went on Facebook to ask whether anyone knew any doctors. I ran all the sources past a long-term critical care nurse, three doctors and a midwife. On the evidence we have, it sounds as if Jane died of a pulmonary embolism [the blockage of an artery in the lungs]. We considered all sorts of theories, and the consensus was that this was the likeliest scenario.

### How do you think we should look back on Jane?

If Jane or her son, King Edward VI, had lived longer, I think her reputation would be greater and she may well have hailed as a great Tudor matriarch. I think we should look back on her as not just a sly little minx, or a pasty-faced little yes girl, or the bitch that brought down Anne Boleyn. We need to see her as a more rounded personality, who was more proactive than she's been made out. **II**



**Jane Seymour: The Haunted Queen** by Alison Weir  
(Headline, 544 pages, £18.99)



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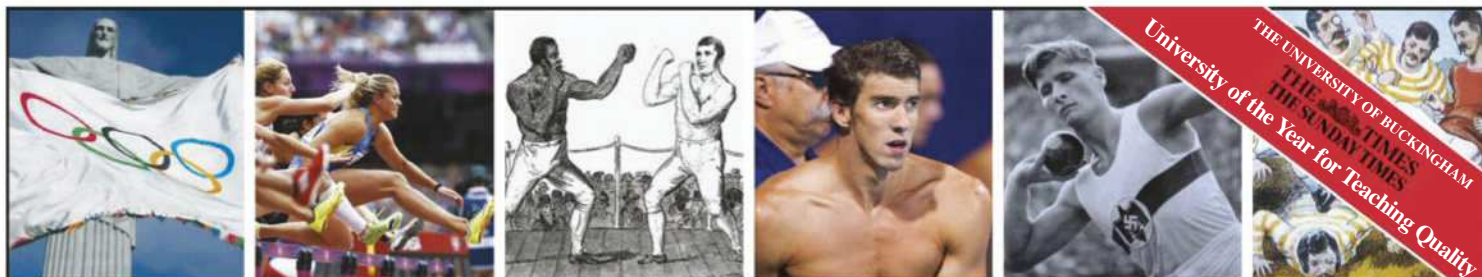
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- **Professor Christopher Young**, historian of sport, Cambridge University
- **Simon Kuper**, author and *Financial Times* columnist



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## REVIEWS



A protester throws cobbles during a demonstration in Paris, on 25 May 1968. Unrest in France that year was mirrored around the world

## Street-fighting years

**KEITH LOWE** recommends an impressive new account of a time when violence and unrest erupted across the globe



### The Long '68: Radical Protest and Its Enemies

by Richard Vinen

Allen Lane, 464 pages, £20



What did the late 1960s look like? Those who are old enough to remember them often look back nostalgically on an era of affluence, creativity, youthful idealism and sexual adventure. However, as Richard Vinen reminds us, there was another version of the 1960s – one of protest, unrest and frequent violence.

Vinen defines '1968' not as a single year, but as a phenomenon with roots in the early 1960s and consequences that lasted long afterwards. At the core of his book is a comparison between four nations that experienced radical protest during this era: the US, France, West Germany and Britain. Unfortunately, he doesn't cover events outside the industrialised west, such as the Prague spring or the violent protests that took place in Mexico just before the Olympic Games. This is a shame, but not surprising. Vinen is an expert on western European history, particularly on Britain and France. Rather sensibly for someone who is tackling such a

labyrinthine subject, he has stuck to what he knows best.

This said, his longest chapter is not about Europe at all, but about America, where the spirit of '68 was first born. He traces the movement from the peaceful civil rights demonstrations early in the decade through to the more violent anti-Vietnam protests later on. The violence, he stresses, came from both sides. After Martin Luther King was assassinated in April 1968, for example, riots broke out in 125 cities, causing around \$100m in damage. Four months later, the tables were turned when police aggressively put down a peaceful demonstration outside the Democratic Party convention in Chicago. According to one woman, "It was like the Bastille stormed us".

In France, the protests were much less violent, but no less dramatic. Events here took place in a more intense timescale than anywhere else, exploding onto the streets of Paris at the beginning of May 1968, but fizzling out a month later. Much recent scholarship on France in 1968 tries to describe events in other parts of the country but, according to Vinen, Paris was always at the centre of events.

In West Germany, meanwhile, the protest movement took the form of a battle between the generations. Those who came of age in the late 1960s and 1970s were intensely aware of what their parents' generation had done during the Second World War, and were unwilling to forgive them for the compromises they had made with Nazism. Students regularly called those in power "Nazis", regardless of whether or not they had been members of the party – as of course many of them had been. According to a CIA report on "Restless Youth" in Germany, the

***In West Germany, the protest movement took the form of a battle between the generations***



## COMING SOON...

"In our July issue, I'll be speaking to Keith Lowe about how ideas of 'civility' revolutionised English society. Our expert reviewers will also be giving their opinions on the latest history titles on topics ranging from Viking warriors to the nuclear threat in the 1980s."

Ellie Cawthorne, staff writer

atmosphere in this country was particularly bleak: "Aside from the resistance conspirators against Hitler, there are almost no heroes."

Britain saw perhaps the tamest protest movement of these four countries, partly because British universities tended not to be in industrial towns, and so workers and students never quite managed to coordinate protests. On the other hand, protest here was also longer lived than in other countries. According to Vinen, it lasted well into the 1970s. I would argue it lasted longer than this, into the 1980s.

This book is an excellent primer on radical protest around the industrialised west. It describes all of the themes that informed the 1968 movement, from civil

### ***This is an antidote to the nostalgia that fills most other books about the 1960s***

rights and anti-colonialism to the sexual politics that Vinen calls a "revolution within the revolution". It describes the youthful idealism that served as the initial impetus for protest, but also the descent into violence as small groups of radicals such as the Weathermen and the Baader-Meinhof gang turned to terrorism in order to achieve their goals.

In covering so much ground, Vinen has been obliged to sacrifice much of the detail that characterised his earlier book on National Service. The one or two anecdotes he does tell, such as the poignant stories of white activists being expelled from the black civil rights movement, and feminist men being rejected by their lovers and their communes for being "oppressive male chauvinists", serve only to highlight what is missing. Nevertheless, this is a comprehensive overview of a turbulent time and a much-needed antidote to the nostalgia that fills most other books about the 1960s. **H**

Keith Lowe is the author of *The Fear and the Freedom: How the Second World War Changed Us* (Viking, 2017)

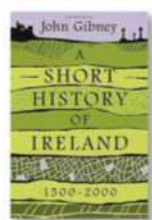
## **Emerald isle**

**CORMAC Ó GRÁDA** *admires a concise and elegantly written account of the story of Ireland over five centuries*

### **A Short History of Ireland 1500-2000**

By John Gibney

Yale University Press, 296 pages, £16.99



The demand for books on Irish history seems to be insatiable. The field is already well served by several longer tomes.

Among them, Roy Foster's *Modern Ireland* (1988) endures and

Thomas Bartlett's *Ireland: A History* (2010) is outstanding. Not only that: the last few years has seen the proliferation of multi-authored 'handbooks' and 'companions' to Irish history, reaching a climax with the launch in Dublin Castle at the end of April of a multi-volume *Cambridge History of Ireland*. In this crowded field, what sets John Gibney's work of synthesis apart is its skilful combination of readability and, despite its modest length, breadth.

Gibney is well known in Ireland as a historian and critic with eclectic interests. He already has several books under his belt, the most recent being a *History of the Easter Rising in 50 Objects* (2016) and *Dublin: A New Illustrated History* (2017), and he has honed his considerable communication skills as a walking tour guide and an outreach officer at Dublin's Glasnevin Cemetery Museum. Those skills are in evidence in *A Short History of Ireland*.

This lively book is divided into five parts, one per century. In terms of page length, the 16th and 17th centuries are short-changed, but only marginally so. Hugh O'Neill (1550-1616), who held Elizabethan

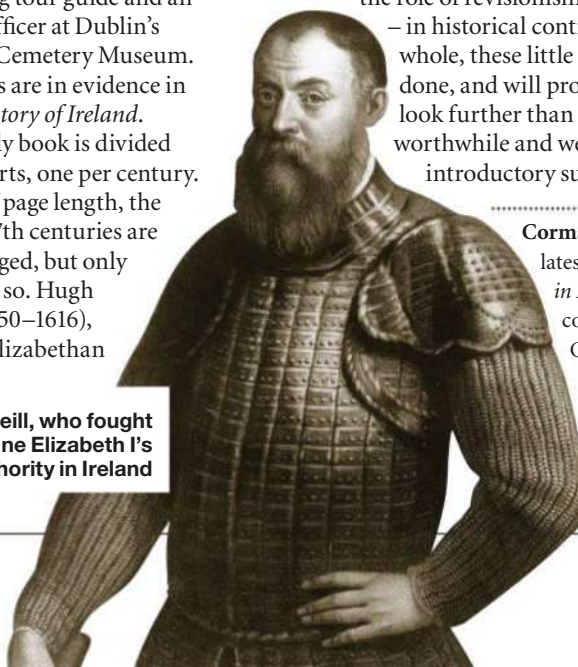
armies at bay for several years in the 1590s, is accorded as much space as Daniel O'Connell or Michael Collins – and rightly so. While standard politico-military history gets priority – with due recognition of the brutality wrought by conquest and plantation and its culmination in "the domination of Irish society by a wealthy Protestant landed class" – Gibney allows social and cultural history more room than most. There are good discussions, for example, on the early history of the Gaelic Athletic Association and on the fortunes of the Irish language. But while poets and poetry get a few mentions, there is nothing on music or on art, and important economic-historical topics – such as the dimensions of economic growth, and trends in wages and living standards – do not feature at all. One can't have everything.

All five parts conclude with short didactic essays on topics "where historians disagree". Controversial issues aired include early modern Ireland's 'kingdom or colony' status; the failure of the Protestant Reformation; the role of Irishmen in the British empire and the First World War; the influence that the recent Troubles, which lasted from the 1960s to the 1990s, had on the historiography of the War of Independence; and

the role of revisionism – good and bad – in historical controversy. On the whole, these little essays are well done, and will prompt readers to look further than this very worthwhile and well-priced introductory survey. **H**

Cormac Ó Gráda's latest book is *Famine in European History*, co-edited with Guido Alfani (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Hugh O'Neill, who fought to undermine Elizabeth I's authority in Ireland





One of the Blemmyae, a mythical race whose faces supposedly sat in the middle of their chests. He stands in the margin of the 13th-century English manuscript *The Rutland Psalter*

## Head, shoulders, knees and toes

**JANINA RAMIREZ** enjoys a vivid new book that uses the human body to bring the medieval world to life, warts and all

### Medieval Bodies

by Jack Hartnell

Profile, 352 pages, £25



"Born, bathed, dressed, loved, cut, bruised, ripped, buried, even resurrected, medieval bodies are a path to understanding the very essence of everyday life in the past." So Jack

Hartnell presents his thesis: through this study of medieval attitudes to head, senses, skin, bone, heart, blood, hands, stomach, genitals and feet, the reader will come to understand what it was like to be alive in the medieval period.

It is certainly an excellent and immersive introduction for readers unfamiliar with the period. Hartnell vividly evokes a picture of an era when the world had a different scale, sensory stimuli and even soundscape to our own.

This is also an ambitious work in terms of scope. While a lack of clear chronological and geographical boundaries means it feels rather over-expansive at times, it is full of interesting observations and there are coherent themes threaded through. What's more, Hartnell writes in a non-fusty style, drawing modern parallels, and weaving narratives to compel the reader on.

When analysing strange 'others' like the Blemmyae (humans with their faces in their chests) recorded in medieval manuscripts documenting the 'wonders' of Africa, Hartnell speculates whether "perfectly sensible medieval people really believed that such a strange race actually

**Hartnell rapidly unpacks our notions of 'the medieval'**

existed". He draws a parallel with a belief in aliens – 'the little green men' – that some hold to today. It's an effective modern analogy. I am all for taking the medieval away from being perceived simply as nasty, brutish, superstitious and dark. Surely, 'they' were simply 'us' but a few centuries back? True, but this fails to tackle some of the fundamental differences between our medieval ancestors and ourselves, not least the Enlightenment pursuit of reason and the scientific developments that have since shaped our understanding of the world.

Hartnell's introduction rapidly unpacks our notions of 'the medieval' by highlighting pop-cultural interpretations from Disney princesses to Bruce Willis. Years of research underlie all his points, but at times the need to shock the reader into taking notice subsumes this scholarship. I wanted footnotes, maps and data, scribbling in the margins every time I was left wanting more.

The chapters are all full of anecdotes, many of which are useful for highlighting the major themes and drawing attention to theoretical developments in the field. For example, the treatment of women in ancient gynaecological texts not only highlights the comparative lack of understanding between anatomical studies then and now, but also flags up more recent debates in terms of feminist dialogues in historical study.

There is a great need for this sort of cross-disciplinary work, which draws connections between the humanities and science. Hartnell has attempted something ambitious, which is eminently readable and stuffed with nuggets of fascinating information. More texts on the medieval period need to be similarly interdisciplinary and ambitious, but they also need to show their workings out. I wanted more details to satisfy my insatiable curiosity into the medieval world. But, like a delicious starter at the beginning of a feast, this book will whet many appetites and open up many further avenues of investigation. **H**

**Janina Ramirez** is a documentary-maker and writer, who lectures in art history at Oxford. Her debut children's fiction book, *Riddle of the Runes: A Viking Mystery*, is out in July

Margaret Thatcher – then leader of the opposition – on the campaign trail to “Keep Britain in Europe,” in June 1975

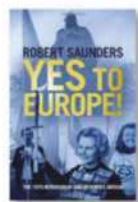


## Euro-vision

**ALWYN TURNER** welcomes a timely study of why Britain voted to stay in the European Economic Community in 1975

**Yes to Europe! The 1975 Referendum and Seventies Britain**  
by Robert Saunders

Cambridge University Press, 530 pages, £24.99



The 1975 referendum on Britain's membership of the European Economic Community didn't really change anything. By a margin of two to one, the country agreed with the government that we should continue to be members, and life and politics went on the same as before. Consequently, it's never loomed very large in histories of the period. Following the contrary outcome in 2016, however, it takes on greater significance, making this a perfect time for Robert Saunders' definitive account of events in 1975.

The differences are what stand out. In 1975, the European message was one of hope. Membership was sold as being “modern, dynamic and optimistic”, as the patriotic choice for the country's future. Fronted by long-time Euro-

enthusiasts Edward Heath and Roy Jenkins, the Yes camp went beyond politics to pursue social and cultural programmes, pumping out T-shirts and bumper stickers that were “bright, glossy and humorous”. So cheerful was the attitude that there was even a suggestion of a wombles-for-Europe initiative.

Against this onslaught of optimism, the No campaign was chaotic, its message negative, with predictions of unemployment, conscription and the death of democracy unless Britain went its own way. Operating on a shoestring, it looked amateurish and dated, as well as being partially composed of – to use David Cameron's later phrase – “fruit-cakes, loonies and closet racists”: a list including the National Front, the Communist party and the IRA. No wonder many of them refused to share a stage with one another.

**In 1975, the European message was one of hope**

Meanwhile, seldom in clear view, there was Harold Wilson, the consummate politician making his last major contribution to the country. (He resigned as prime minister nine months after the referendum.) Unlike Cameron, he took a back seat and adopted a tone of “baffled scepticism”, suspicious of grand visions but ultimately persuaded by the economic arguments for Europe. His image as a pragmatic everyman may have been a pose, but his verdict carried weight.

Saunders warns against premature judgments on the 2016 result “when the plaster is still falling from the ceiling”, but it's hard to avoid the conclusion that, in the intervening four decades, one side learned from its mistakes, while the other forgot everything it knew.

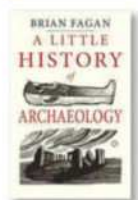
This is history at its best: an insightful, exhaustively researched and immensely readable book that captures the period

## Fortune and glory

**DAVID MUSGROVE** enjoys a lively introduction to the story of archaeology that digs up plenty of tales of derring-do

**A Little History of Archaeology**  
by Brian Fagan

Yale University Press, 288 pages, £14.99



Indiana Jones is the most famous archaeologist ever. He's not real of course, but there are actual figures in the history of archaeology who have a touch of Indy about them. The circus strongman turned pharaoh-hunter Giovanni Belzoni, the Homeric enquirer Heinrich Schliemann, and the desert

explorer Gertrude Bell all had adventures worthy of a Spielberg film.

In a book about the story of archaeology, it would be easy to fill the pages with tales of digging derring-do from such big personalities. Brian Fagan, the noted prehistorian, does not disappoint in that regard, but neither does he provide a narrative of just one remarkable discovery after another. Yes, you get Howard Carter seeing “wonderful things” as he breaks into Tutankhamun's tomb, and the dog falling down a rabbit hole to show us Lascaux's prehistoric cave paintings, but

Fagan also offers a fascinating interlude, for example, on Christian Thomsen's drier – but equally important – research that led to the three-age dating system.

The author's approach is broadly chronological. He charts the story from 19th-century treasure-hunting among the ruins of ancient Egypt, up to today's professional, multi-disciplinary, scientific approaches. His short chapters focus on key discoveries over the years, and introduce most of the major archaeological sites and famous archaeologists.

Much of his story tells of colonial-era Europeans (men, mainly) taking often colonial attitudes to non-western cultures. Yet we are carried on a global journey, with chapters revealing how discoveries in the Americas, Africa and Asia have shaped archaeological practice today.

GETTY IMAGES



as well as the vote. It was a Britain where the priorities for women – according to a pamphlet fronted by agony aunt Marjorie Proops – should be their husband's job and their children's future; where the concerns of the Commonwealth still formed part of public debate; and where the Church of England was listened to when it pronounced on national sovereignty – a “heresy” whose eradication was a “spiritual issue”, according, respectively, to the bishops of London and Chichester.

Whatever else has changed in Britain, however, there remains an unfortunate tradition of political pop songs: it turns out that Mike Read's ‘UKIP Calypso’ had a predecessor in the 1975 Yes campaign's ‘Common Market Reggae’. **H**

**Alwyn W Turner** is the author of *Crisis? What Crisis?: Britain in the 1970s* (2013)

This is a cracking read, with the stories beautifully told, and many great insights into how the discipline has developed along the way. Some things are missing; British readers may wonder why Sutton Hoo doesn't get a mention. And although the author cites the importance of publicity and self-promotion to early excavators, he doesn't devote much time to modern media archaeology. The impact of TV programmes such as *Time Team*, or indeed blockbuster films featuring fictional archaeologists, on public perception of the subject would surely have been worthy of inclusion – perhaps Indiana Jones should have been in this book after all. **H**

**David Musgrove** is content director of *BBC History Magazine* and has a doctorate in archaeology

BRIDGEMAN

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## Renaissance man

**JOANNE PAUL** recommends a glittering new biography of one of 16th-century Europe's most charismatic and complex royals

### Francis I

by **Leonie Frieda**

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 400 pages, £25



Western Europe in the first half of the 16th century witnessed a triumvirate of attractive, virile young monarchs, whose relations altered from intense brotherly love to bloody hatred frequently and with wide-reaching consequences. In England, Henry VIII always dominates our view of this period, with Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, and Francis I of France slipping in and out of the spotlight as needed. Henry's story has been told many times, but Frieda's new biography of Francis irrefutably proves that it is not the only story worth telling.

Frieda captures early 16th-century France in all its brilliant and dramatic juxtapositions. Francis was in many ways a modern monarch, committed to developments in the arts and sciences, but his unexpected kingship was also rooted in medieval lore: the fulfilment of a prophecy uttered by a hermit, after whom he was named. Even as increasingly advanced gunfire transformed Europe's battlefields, rivals Francis and Charles V still considered solving their disputes by single combat. And for all the civility and culture of his court, when Francis's son died unexpectedly, he still exacted his revenge through a cruel medieval style of

execution, having his son's innocent tutor slowly torn apart by four charging horses. Thus Frieda portrays the *Game of Thrones*-like world that Francis inhabited.

In Frieda's treatment, Francis becomes the embodiment of juxtaposition and transition. With surprising success, he managed to balance roles as chivalric warrior, Renaissance patron, Machiavellian strategist and Catholic defender, not to mention more private roles as dedicated son, father, brother, and more famously, lothario. It is important, on this last aspect of Francis's character, not to overly romanticise the king's ability to ‘have his way’ with women, something that Frieda at one point equates with his skill in hunting, and at another uses as a reason to suggest his innocence of a rape charge.

The women who surround Francis are intelligent and remarkably influential, more so than many of the king's male advisors and friends. As this is a book about Francis, it is fair that it only makes indications towards their own lives and characters, but it does make the reader crave more. Francis's court is more like an ensemble-cast than a one-man show, and Frieda does brilliantly to


condense all the captivating personalities, events, intrigues and conflicts of his reign into one book. *Francis I* transports the reader into the glittering and dangerous world of 16th-century France. It is a testament to its quality that upon

closing the book, you don't entirely want to leave. **H**

**Joanne Paul** is lecturer in early modern history at the University of Sussex

A 16th-century portrait of French king Francis I





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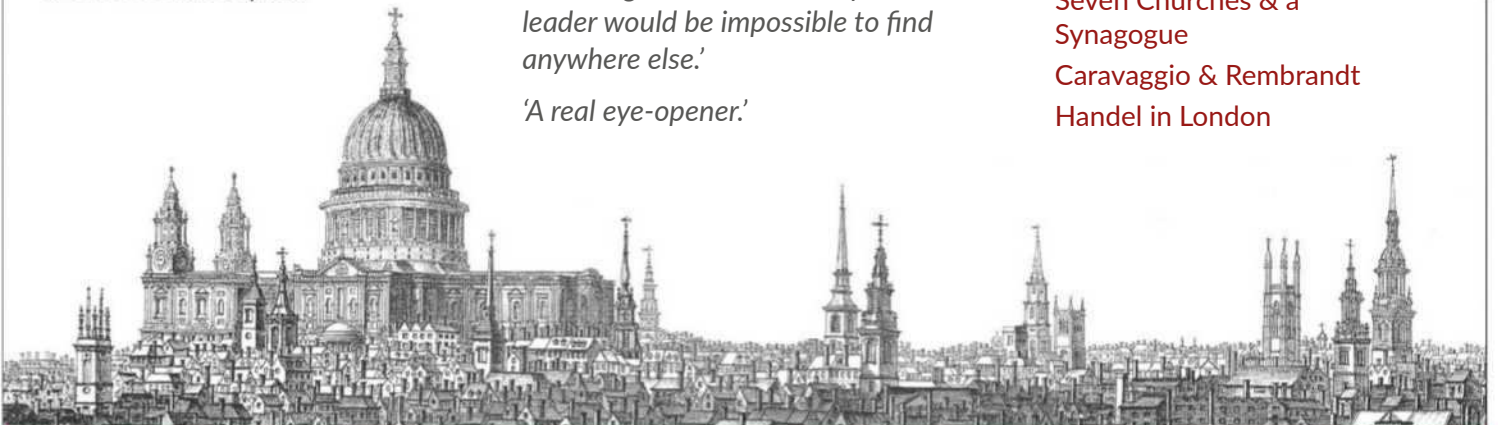
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## PAPERBACKS

**History: Why It Matters**

by Lynn Hunt

Polity, 140 pages, £9.99



This short book argues for a knowledge of the past as the best defence against tyranny. This is ironic,

given that modern authoritarians such as Erdogan, Putin and Xi make much use of history. So do religious movements.

Hunt provides an account on a global scale that, despite noting the assault on Eurocentricism, is dominated by the west and has little to say about India, Iran and so on. China receives insufficient attention. History in novels, films, TV and the new media – as well as the rise in popularity in family history – receives scant space. While Hunt sensibly notes what she terms “the ongoing democratisation of history”, she does not adequately probe the consequences in terms of the challenge to “the standards of

historical truth” she endorses. The further reading list very much matches Hunt’s perspectives, and there is no real debate. Because of these and other deficiencies, sadly I cannot recommend this book.

**Jeremy Black** is the author of several books including *Contesting History* (Bloomsbury, 2014)

**The Cold War: A New Oral History**

by Bridget Kendall

BBC Books, 672 pages, £12.99



Twenty-four-year-old Princeton graduate Kenneth Ford was excited to be part of the team trying to develop

a hydrogen bomb in Los Alamos. It was a “very, very challenging physics problem”, and Ford thought that, all in all, it would be better for the world if the US got the H-bomb before the Russians.

Twenty-year-old Japanese

fisherman Matashichi Oishi, meanwhile, was caught within the danger zone of the Castle Bravo H-bomb test on 1 March 1954. He felt the earth shaking and watched white powder falling from the sky that burned his skin, leaving him with severe radiation exposure.

These are just two of the many stories captured in Kendall’s book, which serve to bring this period to life in a memorable and moving way. Homing in on key episodes of this era, each chapter marries a short, contextual essay with several eyewitness accounts that provide contrasting personal insights into that moment. As the BBC’s Moscow correspondent when the Soviet Union fell apart, Kendall is uniquely placed to bring all of this together.

**Hester Vaizey** is the author of *Born in the GDR* (OUP, 2014)

**Inglorious Empire**

by Shashi Tharoor

Penguin, 336 pages, £9.99



Erudite and beautifully written, this book is, self-confessedly, an attempt to right what Shashi

Tharoor – an Indian politician and ex-UN diplomat – sees as the wrongs inflicted by historians such as Niall Ferguson, Andrew Roberts and co in their painting of the British imperial project as a ‘good thing’. In page after page of biting critique, we are reminded about “the looting of India”, reducing “one of the richest and most industrialised economies of the world... into one of the poorest, most backward, illiterate and

diseased societies on Earth”. There is also a distinct undercurrent of blaming the colonial past for much of what is fundamentally wrong with India today.

It is impossible to disagree with the general thesis that the British profited immeasurably by their economic exploitation of India, and that racism, violence and inequality were significant attributes of imperial rule. However, history and the past are not necessarily equivalent. And one need not be an apologist for empire to posit that the Raj was not a black-and-white story but contained infinite shades of grey.

Tharoor’s approach suggests a coherence and consistency to British policy that didn’t really exist. British power was to a considerable extent fleeting, fragmented or illusory. His portrayal also affords relatively little agency to Indians – princes, peasants and everyone in-between – other than to the nationalists, who are portrayed with insufficient nuance. While political and societal fissures based on religion and caste were undoubtedly exploited by the British, their origins and appeal also lay firmly in India’s past. As Gandhi once remarked: “We divide, you conquer.” Yet, Tharoor appears to give pre-western empires such as the Mughals an almost clean bill of health, but judges the Raj by the standards of Utopia and, unsurprisingly, finds it wanting. At the end, one is left wondering if perhaps the legacy of the British imperial encounter deserves to be examined in a less polarised fashion. **H**

**Chandrika Kaul** is senior lecturer in modern history at the University of St Andrews



British men taking tea in India, c1890. Shashi Tharoor’s book *Inglorious Empire* is highly critical of the British Raj



An untouched natural beach in French Polynesia. Lydia Syson's new historical novel follows a Victorian family who build a home on a remote island in Oceania

## FICTION

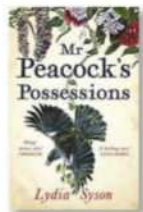
# Paradise lost

**NICK RENNISON** is reeled in by a rough-edged new take on the Swiss Family Robinson story

### Mr Peacock's Possessions

By Lydia Syson

Zaffre, 432 pages, £12.99



Lydia Syson's fine novel is *The Swiss Family Robinson* for adults. Like Johann Wyss's book, it follows the fortunes of a family living in isolation on a remote island, but it explores ideas that find

no place in the 19th-century children's classic. In the 1870s, the Peacocks have been drifting around the Pacific, from New Zealand to Samoa, for several years, driven ever onwards by the restlessness of Mr Peacock. He yearns for a place that he can call entirely his own, where he is unfettered by the rules of others. He finds it in an uninhabited island in Oceania.

Delivered there by a trading ship, the family struggles to turn it into the Eden they originally envisaged. Another passing ship, one of the very few to visit, brings them six young missionary-educated Polynesian workmen to help with their labours. On the very day they arrive, the eldest Peacock son, Albert,

a sensitive teenage boy who has enraged his father by his lack of enthusiasm for the island project, goes missing. Has he suffered some fatal accident? Has he stowed away on the departing ship? Days and weeks pass and there is no explanation of Albert's fate. Meanwhile, his spirited sister Lizzie finds an ally in Kalala, one of the newcomers. Together they explore the island and gradually uncover two terrible secrets.

As Mr Peacock's vision of a potential paradise disintegrates, both Lizzie and Kalala are forced, in different ways, to question their beliefs about the people whose lives have shaped their own. Innocence is cruelly lost but new hopes emerge from the island's tragedies.

Syson's novel is richly evocative of a Pacific world in flux, as cultures clash and individuals battle to find their place amid the ensuing confusion.

It's also a very moving story of fathers and children, of faith and disillusion, and of the dangerous consequences of trying to take possession of people as well as land. **II**

**Nick Rennison** is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus, 2016)

## THREE MORE NOVELS SET ON PACIFIC ISLANDS

### Easter Island

Jennifer Vanderbes (2003)



Two women in two different eras both become obsessed by the mysterious culture of Easter Island in this haunting and imaginative first novel.

In 1913, Elsa Beazley, newly married to an anthropologist, immerses herself in the island's past and present. In a parallel narrative set 60 years later, a recently widowed American botanist arrives on Easter Island and is drawn into a relationship which proves to hold a connection to Elsa.

### Euphoria

Lily King (2014)

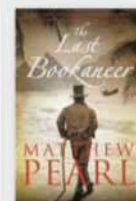


Inspired by the life of Margaret Mead, the controversial anthropologist who wrote *Coming of Age in Samoa*, this evocative novel unfolds a love triangle

against an unusual backdrop. In Papua New Guinea, Nell – the character based on Mead – and her husband join forces with another anthropologist and head upriver to research a remote tribe. They end by learning as much about themselves as the people they are supposedly studying.

### The Last Bookaneer

Matthew Pearl (2015)



In Samoa, self-exiled Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson races against approaching death to finish his final novel. To the island comes the flamboyant,

unscrupulous Pen Davenport, a so-called 'bookaneer', who plans to steal Stevenson's manuscript, take it to New York and flog it to the highest bidder. On a tropical island, against a backdrop of simmering violence, a complicated relationship develops between the would-be thief and the ailing genius.

Ross (Aidan Turner) faces some new challenges as *Poldark* makes a comeback



Jonathan Wright previews the pick of upcoming programmes

# TV & RADIO

HISTORY  
MAGAZINE  
CHOICE

## Western values

### Poldark

TV BBC One

Scheduled for June

Series four of writer Debbie Horsfield's adaptations of the novels of Winston Graham finds Ross Poldark (Aidan Turner) embarking on a political career while feeling the need to defend the good folk of Cornwall from dastardly George Warleggan (Jack Farthing). Meantime, what's going on with Demelza (Eleanor Tomlinson) following her 'dalliance' at the end of the last season?

Alongside returning favourites, there are some new faces this time around – notably Rebecca Front (*War and Peace*, *The Thick of It*) as Lady Whitworth.



The tsar and his wife pose with their eldest child, Olga, in 1896

## The last tsar

### Nicholas and Alexandra

TV Yesterday

Scheduled for Thursday 24 May

A century has passed since Russian revolutionaries executed Nicholas II, the Empress Alexandra and their children. But how did the couple make so many miscalculations that their lives should have ended so brutally? This fascinating two-part docudrama promises to offer some clues as historian Dr Suzannah Lipscomb charts their lives, tracing how the tsar and his wife overcame considerable hurdles – a long-distance relationship and very different religious upbringings – to form a strong, loving relationship. But this is also a story of how the couple misread the country's mood, notably as ordinary Russians suffered in the First World War.

## Campaign trail

A Lucy Worsley documentary heads up a BBC season marking the centenary of women gaining the vote

### How Women Won the Vote with Lucy Worsley

TV BBC One

Scheduled for June

Today, we take the idea of casting a ballot for granted. Yet we only have to go back to 1918 and the Representation of the People Act to find the moment when women, provided they were aged over 30 and met a property qualification, were granted the vote – along with all men over the age of 21.

It's a centenary being marked across the BBC in a season where the cornerstone is a 90-minute documentary presented by Lucy Worsley. Her film serves as a reminder that this was a long campaign encompassing people from across society and was successful precisely because of this. It also highlights the fact that many who campaigned employed militant tactics.

"It's about the dirty, violent, sometimes forgotten underbelly of the suffrage movement," Worsley tells *BBC History Magazine*. "It's easy to get the idea that the vote was won by nice ladies in big hats singing songs and waving banners, a bit like the suffragette mum in *Mary Poppins*. We draw attention to just how extreme some

of the suffragette 'outrages' could be.

"I can also half-understand – if not condone – just how angry they were, and why they felt driven to do it. I hope viewers will too."

Drawing throughout on original sources, Worsley begins her story with an October 1905 incident where Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney were arrested after a scuffle in Manchester involving policemen being spat upon. As well as heckling cabinet ministers and protesting at the Commons, suffragettes built bombs and conducted arson attacks. "There's a clear escalation in the violence being used, which is accompanied by an ever-heavier state response," says Worsley.

This response included force-feeding women who were on hunger strike. Worsley found it "brutal and horrific" even to see a reconstruction.

Elsewhere in the season, the BBC will give coverage across its networks to **Processions** (Sunday 10 June), a mass participation artwork that will see women and girls marching in suffragette colours. Watch out too for **The Making of a Militant** (June, BBC One North-West and iPlayer), presented by Sally Lindsay, which profiles suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst. **H**



"It's about the dirty, violent, sometimes forgotten underbelly of the suffrage movement"

Lucy Worsley (front, centre) discovers what life was like on the front line of the women's suffrage campaign



*The Embarkation of William III, Prince of Orange, at Helvoetsluis – painted by an unknown Dutch artist – was purchased for Hampton Court Palace in 1846*

## Going Dutch

**The Invention of the Netherlands**  
**RADIO** BBC Radio 4 Wednesday 23 May

In the 17th century, the Netherlands rose to become the world's foremost economic and maritime superpower, controlling territory in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The story of how this transformation occurred forms the basis of the latest series in the *Invention* strand, presented by Misha Glenny.

It's a tale that encompasses Britain and the way that ideas from the Netherlands – notably around trade and the administration of empire – were imported to England with the

invasion of William of Orange in 1688.

As the series also outlines, it was an empire that didn't last long, partly due to the Netherlands' population being so small. But if the country's subsequent history has been less about world leadership, it's been no less fascinating.

The second episode, for example, finds Glenny looking at how the feuding of different cities scuppered efforts to build a unified kingdom of the Netherlands after Waterloo; while the final show looks at the key role the region played in the formation of the EU.

**Listen out for an interview with Misha on our History Extra podcast soon**

## Burnt-out case

### **Journey's End**

**DVD** (Lionsgate Home Entertainment, £9.99)

It's 1918 and a young lieutenant, Raleigh (Asa Butterfield), arrives on the western front. In contrast to many would-be combatants during the Vietnam War half a century later, he has used his connections not to *avoid* conflict but to ensure he is in the thick of the action. Raleigh wants to serve with a family friend, Captain Stanhope (Sam Claflin).

But, as this fine adaptation of RC Sherriff's 1928 stage play makes painfully clear, Raleigh's admiration of Stanhope is

misplaced because the officer's experiences of warfare have left him hollowed, an aggressive alcoholic. This meeting of innocence and traumatised cynicism is, of course, intended to be symbolic, yet it also works brilliantly as drama because life in the trenches is so claustrophobic.

This makes a film adaptation risky because there's the danger of opening out the text, of introducing too much distracting spectacle to a piece that is, at root, about the futility of conflict.

That this never happens is to the credit of writer Simon Reade and director Saul Dibb. The cast, which also includes Paul Bettany and Stephen Graham, excels – so when tragedy strikes, it is as gut-wrenching for all as it is inevitable.



**Asa Butterfield turns in a mature performance as the wide-eyed rookie Raleigh**

## ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...

**FIND WEEKLY TV & RADIO UPDATES AT**  
[historyextra.com/tv-radio](http://historyextra.com/tv-radio)



**Margaret of Anjou, the two-time queen of England, with Henry VI**

In 1861, Emperor Alexander II of Russia passed legislation intended to give liberty to millions of Russian peasants and servants. It was a remarkable moment. As to its deeper meaning, that's a question for Melvyn Bragg and his guests on *In Our Time* (BBC Radio 4, Thursday 17 May), when they discuss the emancipation of the serfs. On Thursday 24 May, another set of experts meet to discuss Margaret of Anjou, the queen of England on two occasions thanks to her marriage to Henry VI.

In another continuing Radio 4 series, *Great Lives* (Tuesday 29 May) includes Barbara Stocking, the former head of Oxfam, speaking up for Catherine the Great. Returning on Tuesday 5 June, *Making History* (BBC Radio 4) features the usual eclectic mix of stories, ranging from flirting in the Victorian era to our forebears' hatred of hedgehogs. Historians Helen Castor and Tom Holland are the presenters.

On BBC Two and iPlayer, *Burma with Simon Reeve* (May) sees the adventurer head for Myanmar. As well as exploring the plight of Rohingya Muslims, Reeve also visits the ancient capital of Bagan and meets a commander in the world's longest-running civil war.

What motivates dictators to seize and then hold power? It's a question central to *Dictators Rulebook* (National Geographic, Wednesday 23 May). Each of the series' six episodes focuses on a different strongman, with profiles of North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung, Saddam Hussein, Mussolini, Franco, Manuel Noriega and Idi Amin.

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## HISTORY EXPLORER

### Georgian fossil hunting

Nige Tassell and Michael Taylor explore Dorset's **Jurassic Coast**, where 19th-century palaeontologist Mary Anning made some of the most significant geological finds in history

It's a sound you don't hear on too many other British beaches, at least not beyond Dorset's Jurassic Coast. It's tinny and metallic, and on busy days, it's all around you. It's the sound of geological hammer on rock, the sound of hoped-for discovery.

As it's the first warm afternoon of the Easter school holidays, today you can hear that chiming sound right along the coastline around Lyme Regis and Charmouth. This fossil-rich stretch of coast has been the haunt of palaeontologists, both professional and would-be, for centuries. Today is no exception. The main beach-access car parks have no vacant spaces. The chance to discover evidence of life that has been trapped in rock for millions of years, with the warm sun at your back, is too strong a draw.

Along the rugged, weather-beaten coast, today's hammer-wielding masses are doing it for fun. Nearly 200 years ago, Lyme Regis's most famous fossil hunter was doing it to survive.

Born in the town in 1799, Mary Anning (pictured) was the daughter of a carpenter who supplemented his income by selling geological finds to curious tourists. When he died in 1810, his wife Molly took over the fossil business. The family's first significant find occurred the following year when Mary's brother, Joseph, uncovered the skull of an ichthyosaur, a large marine reptile that

lived about 200 million years ago. Within a few months, Mary had found the remainder of the skeleton. The find generated much-needed cash for the family, who had been left in serious debt by Mary's father. An injection of £23 into the Anning coffers, paid by the local lord of the manor, was very welcome; it was around the average annual wage for a farm labourer. Eight years and two further sales later, the skeleton was in the possession of the British Museum (it's now in the Natural History Museum), inspiring visitors to seek out the treasures of Dorset's beaches for themselves.

#### Fossil fever

While it's probably too much of an overstatement to describe Lyme Regis at the time as a fossil equivalent of a gold-rush town, in the 19th century there was a regular flow of human traffic towards what is now called the Jurassic Coast, at least in part motivated by the growing interest in palaeontology. Interest in Mary had been growing too. She had continued the family business, and in so doing became one of the tourist attractions of Lyme.

"Seaside resorts had become fashionable, and Lyme Regis was on a direct route from Bath," explains Michael Taylor, specialist in Jurassic marine reptiles and the history of their collecting. "Think Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: genteel holidaymakers, middle-class folk on annuities, officers on half-pay. They could go for a walk, dance in the

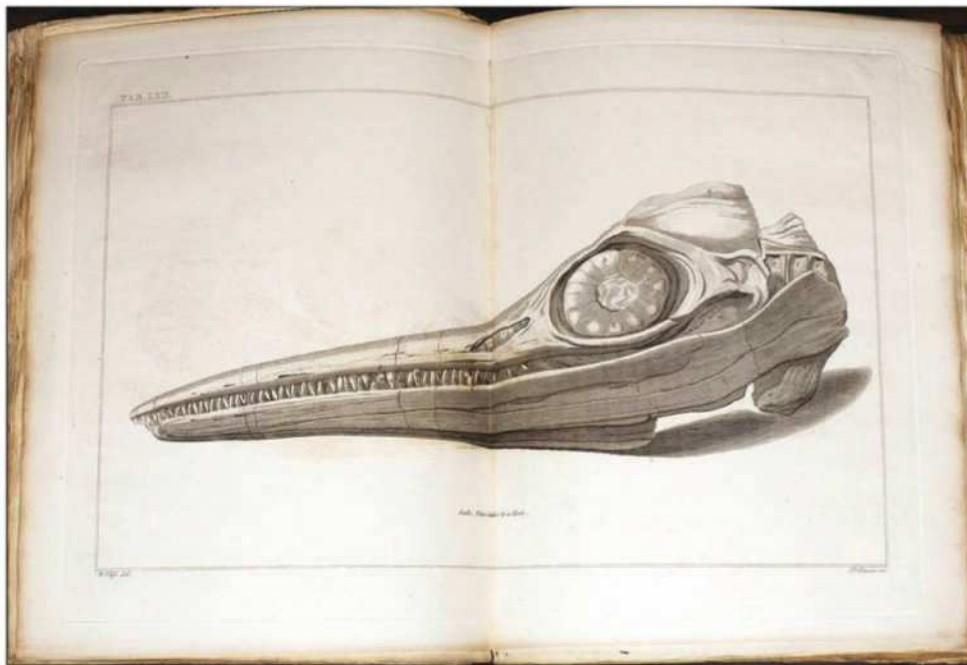


The beach at Lyme Regis, on the Jurassic Coast of Devon and Dorset, has attracted fossil hunters for centuries

AWL IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN



“The Lyme Jurassic ecosystem was one of the first ancient worlds reconstructed in words and pictures”



**The first scientific illustration of the ichthyosaur skull discovered by Joseph Anning, published in 1814. It was Mary who located the rest of the marine reptile**

Assembly Rooms, play cards, write letters, collect seaweed, paint the fashionably Romantic landslipped scenery – and, for a few, seek fossils on the beach or in Anning’s shop.

“Anning was serving the upmarket tourist, as well as selling top-end specimens to museums,” says Taylor. “But Lyme Regis was special for geologists at all levels: fossils freshly generated by storms, coastal erosion and landslipping – and, insanely, the quarrying of the shore and cliffs for limeburning, endangering the town. Anyone at all interested in geology made the town a stop on their itinerary, at the very least.”

Two centuries on, fossils continue to provide Lyme Regis with a strong identity. Specimens are sold in shops all around the town, while the gloriously higgledy-piggledy Lyme Regis Museum, extended by the completion of its Mary Anning Wing last year, satiates visitors’ thirst for knowledge.

### **The meaning of life**

The museum is built on the site of the original Anning family shop, by the sea. Both this and Anning’s later shop, up steep Broad Street, would have been perfect for tempting the well-heeled passing trade to invest in a curio or souvenir of their stay. “Anning helped the local economy with the

footfall that she attracted,” Taylor comments. “She seems to have been well-regarded by most palaeontologists, especially the female ones, and notably kind to little children buying fossils for pennies. Geologists held at least one personal auction and two whiprounds – one to complement a government grant – to help Anning at times of crisis, such as her final illness. When she died of breast cancer in 1847, they and Lyme’s rather grand vicar erected a memorial window in the church, commemorating her good nature and kindness to the poor as much as her geological work.”

Although Anning was by no means the only collector in this area, her finds were highly significant. She discovered important specimens of high quality, including the first complete plesiosaur and a flying reptile known as a pterosaur.

Such discoveries significantly shaped scientific views in the 19th century. “Serious thinkers were already agreed that fossils were remains of very ancient life,” explains Taylor. “You could look at them as living things of the past, and the Lyme Jurassic ecosystem, if you like, was one of the first ancient worlds reconstructed in words and pictures. Anning’s finds were valuable here, especially the coprolites – fossil faeces – of predators such as sharks and ichthyosaurs

with the remains of prey in them. Lyme Regis helped develop the wider picture of how life changed over geological time, though it was another matter whether this change was by transmutation – as evolution was then called – or successive special divine creations.”

The discovery of ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs not only charged the public imagination but also influenced debate within scientific quarters. A new chapter was being written and inserted into the known timeline of life. Says Taylor: “These fossils helped drive home the notion of an Age of Reptiles. Moreover, as the world became better explored, it was clear that these animals, and many others such as the ammonites also found at Lyme Regis, were now extinct.

“Fossils were also hard to compare with living forms. This posed real problems about the pattern and completeness of divine creation, and why God should have rendered many organisms extinct. But I don’t think the Lyme Regis reptiles had much to do with Darwin’s concept of evolution through natural selection. They were too far out on a limb, without any obvious relatives, to be worth arguing about.”

As a carpenter’s daughter eking out a



**The Jurassic Coast remains a major draw for fossil hunters from all over the world**

**“ANNING DISCOVERED IMPORTANT SPECIMENS OF HIGH QUALITY, INCLUDING A FLYING REPTILE KNOWN AS A PTEROSAUR”**

## VISIT

### Lyme Regis Museum



Bridge Street, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3QA  
● [lymeregismuseum.co.uk](http://lymeregismuseum.co.uk)

living by selling her discoveries in her shop, Anning was far from a paid-up member of this scientific community. And that's why her life and work weren't documented in any great abundance. Over the two centuries since, the paucity of information has, argues Taylor, led to misinterpretation and misinformation.

"My colleague Hugh Torrens has studied her historiography – the history of history. Probing backwards, assessing the identity and competence of various authors, and comparing their words with their sources, shows that writers depressingly often repeated old errors and added new ones. There is not that much hard documentary evidence about Anning as a person either, and historians tend to discount fossils as opposed to paper documents. It all left gaps for people to fill with their own priorities and moral axe-grinding, especially in improving books for children.

"Hugh has also found that formal records about her finds – museum annual reports and the like – blank her out almost completely. But that was bog-normal, a combination of patchy record-keeping in the early days of museums, and the Gentlemen versus Players mentality: you sold a fossil and got money, or you *gave* the fossil and got kudos."

### Sucking her brains

Sometimes those who'd purchased fossils from Anning then used them as the basis of scientific papers they would publish. This allegedly exercised her. "She says the world has used her ill," wrote Anna Maria Pinney, who tried fossil-hunting with Anning. "These men of learning have sucked her brains, and made a great deal of publishing

works, of which she furnished the contents, while she derived none of the advantages."

Although this does omit the fact that Anning gained a living from it.

Mary Anning never published a single scientific paper; all that was ever printed under her name was part of a letter she had sent to the *Magazine of Natural History* questioning a claim made in a previous edition about a fossil shark.

If Anning was an outsider, Taylor argues, this was down to economics and class as much as gender. "Make no mistake, the many geologically inclined female amateurs were, to our eyes, abominably treated for years, excluded from most societies and often relegated to supporting their husbands or brothers. But it is an open question whether this was the most immediate problem for Anning. She already lacked the middle-class levels of disposable cash and time needed to be a geologist, in the sense of being a member of relevant societies and buying the books and journals, and taking the time to participate in the science.

"Rather surprisingly, I'm not sure whether being female actually disadvantaged Anning as far as geology was concerned, given her existing constraints. It surely helped raise her profile as a curiosity for tourists. Certainly, she did well to find her own trade given the few options available to unmarried women in her position."

The passing of time may have skewed or repositioned Anning and her motivations, but it's undeniable that this working-class woman of limited means continues to be the patron saint of fossil hunters, especially so here on the Jurassic Coast where her name and legend are stronger than ever. She's inspired generation after generation to take to the beaches and seek out evidence of these past worlds. Were she to walk among today's wannabe palaeontologists, her ears ringing with the chiming of hammer on rock, Mary Anning would surely approve. **II**

Dr Michael Taylor (left) is a former curator at



National Museums Scotland and visiting fellow at Leicester University. He has written extensively on the history of fossil collecting and museums. Words: Nige Tassell

## FOSSIL HUNTING FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

### 1 Runswick Bay

WHITBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

**Where fossil hunters still flock**

A few miles north of Whitby, Runswick Bay is a rich treasure trove for fossils when the tide is right – ammonites in particular.

The Yorkshire coast is a magnet for palaeontologists, both professional and amateur. You can also admire many of its fossils in nearby Whitby and Scarborough Rotunda museums.

[discoveryyorkshirecoast.com](http://discoveryyorkshirecoast.com)

### 2 Natural History Museum

CENTRAL LONDON

**Where ancient fossils are on show**

The Natural History Museum's collection of marine reptile fossils features a great many discoveries from the Jurassic Coast of Dorset, including several finds made by Mary Anning in the early 19th century near her hometown of Lyme Regis. [nhm.ac.uk](http://nhm.ac.uk)

### 3 Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre

DORSET

**Where a sea-reptile resides**

Visit this year and you'll come face to face with the ichthyosaur that starred in the BBC documentary *Attenborough and the Sea Dragon*, not to mention scores of fossils discovered in the heart of the Jurassic Coast. The centre also runs guided fossil hunting walks.

[charmouth.org/chcc](http://charmouth.org/chcc)

### 4 Oxford University Museum of Natural History

OXFORD

**Where 375,000 fossils are gathered**

This museum boasts a sizeable collection of fossil specimens from right around the globe. The collection includes specimens gathered by William Buckland, the noted palaeontologist (and associate of Mary Anning) who was born at Axminster near Lyme Regis. [oum.ox.ac.uk](http://oum.ox.ac.uk)

### 5 Llantwit Major

VALE OF GLAMORGAN, SOUTH WALES

**Where shellfish are plentiful**

One of the most southerly points in Wales, the beach at Llantwit Major offers different fossils than nearby south-west England.

Ammonites are less common than in Dorset or the north Somerset coast, but shellfish – such as brachiopods and gastropods – are numerous and comparatively easy to find. [visitwales.com](http://visitwales.com)

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# FIVE THINGS TO DO IN JUNE

## Eastern treasures

### EXHIBITION

#### Splendours of the Subcontinent: Four centuries of South Asian Paintings and Manuscripts

The Queen's Gallery,  
Buckingham Palace, London  
8 June–14 October

☎ 0303 123 7301

● [royalcollection.org.uk](http://royalcollection.org.uk)



**W**hen British trade routes to south Asia opened up at the end of the 16th century, the power and riches of the Mughal empire – particularly the magnificence of the Mughal court – inspired countless artists to capture its splendour in intricate paintings and manuscripts.

This month, for the first time, highlights from the Royal Collection's extensive collection of south Asian paintings and manuscripts will go on display, alongside paintings, prints, drawings and photographs from the wider Royal Collection. Together, these works of art will explore the more than 400-year shared history of the British monarchy and the rulers of south Asia.

Works on show include paintings from the 1656–57 *Padshahnama* manuscript ('Book of Emperors'), an illustrated chronicle commissioned by the fifth Mughal emperor, Shah-Jahan, as a celebration of his reign and dynasty, and presented to George III by Lord Teignmouth, governor-general of India, in c1797. Queen Victoria's Hindustani diaries, written with the help of her Indian secretary Abdul Karim, will also be displayed, together with her Hindustani phrase book.



A painting from the *Padshahnama* manuscript, in which the 4th Mughal emperor Jahangir presents Prince Khurram with a turban ornament

### EXHIBITION

#### Aftermath: Art in the Wake of World War One

Tate Britain, London  
Until 23 September

☎ 020 7887 8888 (booking line)

● [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk)

Marking 100 years since the end of the First World War, this exhibition examines how artists reacted to memories of war – from documenting its destructive impact, to the building of public memorials. More than 150 works dating from 1916–32 will be on show, by artists such as George Grosz, Fernand Léger and CRW Nevinson.



A detail from CRW Nevinson's  
1917 painting *Paths of Glory*

### EVENT

#### Wimpole History Festival

Wimpole Estate, Royston  
22–24 June

☎ 01223 357851 (booking line)

● [wimpolehistoryfestival.com](http://wimpolehistoryfestival.com)

Cambridge Literary Festival and the National Trust have joined forces once again to produce the Wimpole History Festival, which will see talks and performances on topics from the Vikings to the Victorians. Speakers include Alice Roberts, David Olusoga and Mary Beard. *BBC History Magazine* is one of the event sponsors.

### EXHIBITION

#### Bodies of Evidence

Palace Green Library,  
Durham University  
Until 7 October

☎ 0191 334 6316

● [dur.ac.uk/library/asc](http://dur.ac.uk/library/asc)

The story of the 17th-century Scottish soldiers, captured by Oliver Cromwell's army after the battle of Dunbar in 1650 and discovered in two mass burial sites in Durham city centre, is being told in a new exhibition. The display demonstrates how scientific techniques have helped archaeologists piece together the evidence to reveal how the soldiers lived, why they died, and what became of those who survived.

### NEW MUSEUM

#### International Bomber Command Centre

Canwick Hill, Lincoln  
Now open

☎ 01522 514755

● [internationalbcc.co.uk](http://internationalbcc.co.uk)

The £10m International Bomber Command Centre has opened in Lincoln, to explore and commemorate the contribution made by the men and women of Bomber Command during the Second World War. Set across 10 acres, the site includes walls featuring the names of nearly 58,000 people who died in Bomber Command and a 102ft steel memorial spire – the tallest war memorial in the UK.

## MY FAVOURITE PLACE

# Bruges, Belgium



by **Nicola Tallis**

The latest in our historical holiday series sees Nicola explore the cobbled streets of a Unesco World Heritage city

**P**icture the scene: you're at the top of an 83-metre-high medieval building, looking out across a bustling market square that has been used as such since AD 958. This square, the Markt, was once the commercial centre of the medieval city of Bruges, Belgium, and the building from which you are admiring it is the 13th-century Belfry of Bruges, once the home of the treasury and the municipal archives.

This has to be one of the most spectacular views in Bruges, and it's one that, despite several visits to the city, I experienced for the first time just recently. The reason being that I'm terrified

of heights. But I was determined to confront my fear by climbing the 366 steps to the top of this remarkable building – the tower of which leans a full metre to the east – and I'm so glad I did! The view is breathtaking, and made even more awe-inspiring by the magnificent blend of historic buildings that encase the picturesque square. It's easy to imagine Bruges at the height of its medieval golden age.

I've visited Bruges on several occasions, and such is its charm that it's somewhere I never tire of. The city has a rich history that goes back centuries. What's even more marvellous is that you need not look far to find it – every cobbled street and every

building has a story to tell.

As a centre of trade, by the 14th century Bruges was a wealthy city and it was here, a century later, that Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, chose to house his court. His wedding feast to Isabella of Portugal was staged in Bruges in 1430, and the couple's son, Charles the Bold, succeeded his father in 1467. The following year Charles married Margaret of York, and nine days of lavish celebrations were hosted in the city.

In 1470 the wealthy nobleman Louis de Gruuthuse hosted Margaret's brothers Edward IV and Richard (later Richard III) at his Bruges home, now the Gruuthuse Museum, when they fled England following Henry VI's restoration to the throne. And Edward wasn't the only monarch to seek refuge in the Gruuthuse; Charles II spent part of his exile there too. The Gruuthuse Museum, which is due to reopen in spring 2019, is well worth a visit, and what's more, its prayer chapel once gave the Lords of Gruuthuse direct access to my favourite Bruges landmark: the 13th-century Church of our Lady.

Many visitors flock to the Basilica of the Holy Blood to see the holy relic housed within, but I find the Church of Our Lady,

Medieval buildings lining the Dijver Canal in the centre of the Belgian city of Bruges

which is brimming with exciting historical treasures, much more interesting. Michelangelo's marble sculpture of Madonna and Child is among its chief attractions, but for me there lies here something even more enthralling: the two spectacular Renaissance tombs of Charles the Bold and his daughter, Mary of Burgundy, who died in 1482, aged 25, as the result of a horse-riding accident.

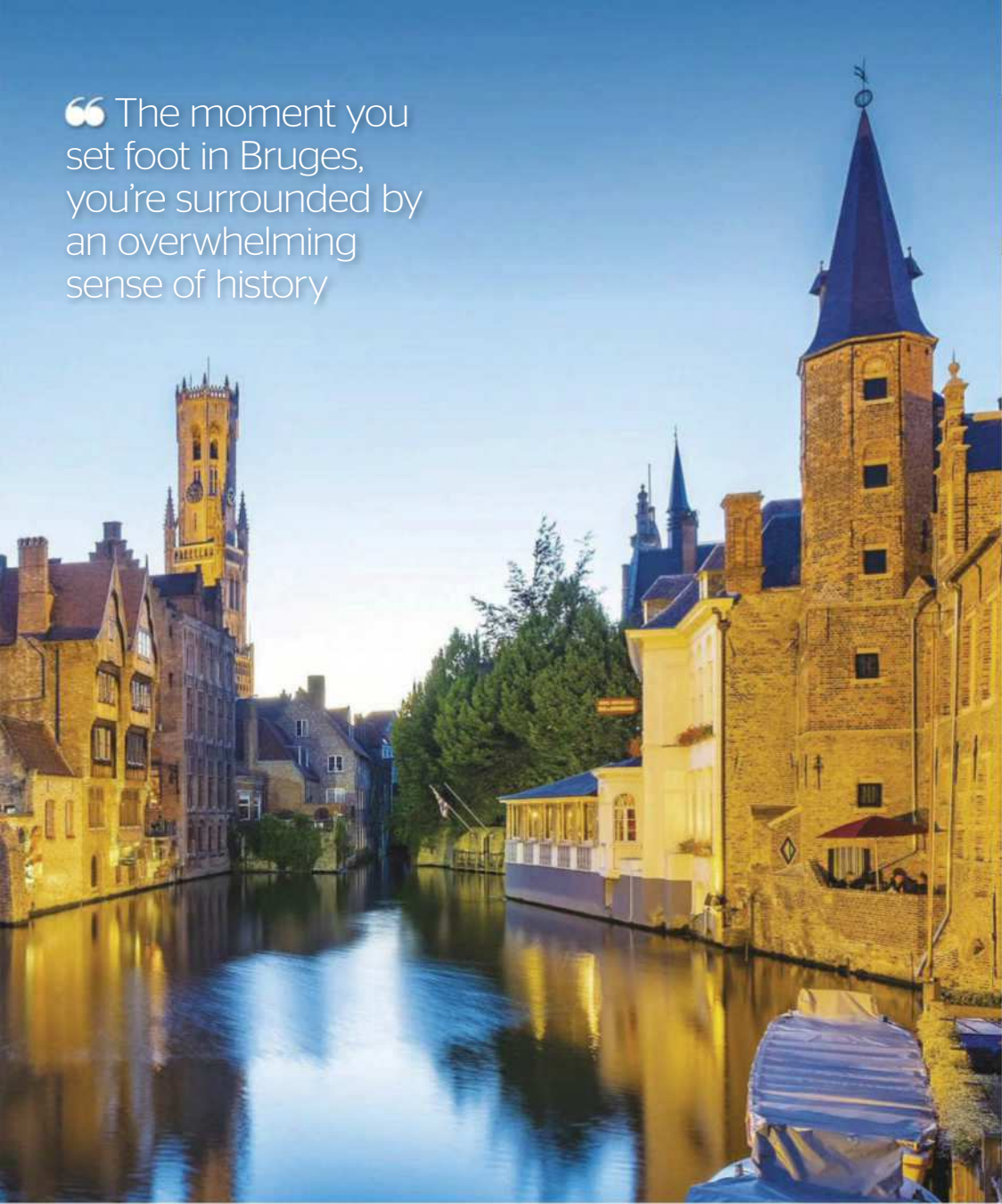
I've always been fascinated by tombs, but these two – adorned with gilt bronze effigies with carved animals at their feet – are particularly fine examples. It's possible that Charles may not actually be buried here, for



The ornate tombs of Charles the Bold and his daughter Mary of Burgundy, in the Church of Our Lady, Bruges



“The moment you set foot in Bruges, you're surrounded by an overwhelming sense of history



## ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

### BEST TIME TO GO

Bruges is often busy, but if you're interested in culture, the best time to visit is in the summer when the city hosts a number of festivals. Alternatively, if you visit in December you can take advantage of the Christmas market, complete with ice rink, in the Markt.

### GETTING THERE

From London, Bruges is easily accessible by Eurostar, with a change at Brussels. It is about an hour and a half drive from Brussels airport. Once there everything is within walking distance. Alternatively, you could take a ride on a horse and cart or hire a segway.

### WHAT TO PACK

Don't forget your camera to capture all the pretty sights and, due to the amount of walking you're likely to do, comfortable footwear is also advisable.

### WHAT TO BRING BACK

Handmade Belgian chocolate is a must – and, with a vast array of shops offering all sorts of exquisite variations, you'll be spoilt for choice.

### READERS' VIEWS

**I love strolling the canals, admiring the bridges while eating a Belgian waffle covered in Belgian chocolate** @winkliedewtoo


**Don't miss the Basilica of the Holy Blood and Old St John's Hospital** @kruijk\_m

a search in the 1970s failed to uncover his remains. Mary certainly is, and she shares a vault with an urn containing the heart of her son, Philip the Handsome, who died in 1506. Her effigy was modelled on her death mask, and was commissioned by her husband, Maximilian of Austria.

The great thing about Bruges is that it's compact, with most sites within walking distance of each other. Just a couple

of minutes away from the Church of Our Lady is the Diamond Museum. If, like me, you like to combine history with a bit of glitz, then this is the perfect place to visit. The Diamond Museum is a great place to learn about the history of diamond cutting – first developed in Bruges – and the role that Bruges, which was once a major centre for jewellery production, played in supplying the Burgundian court with these highly prized gems. The museum offers demonstrations of diamond cutting and hands-on exhibits for those keen to handle the real thing.

Wherever your interest lies,

the moment you set foot in Bruges, you're surrounded by an overwhelming sense of history that draws you in. I've fallen in love with this captivating city, which I feel sure will continue to be my favourite place to visit for many years to come. 

**Nicola Tallis** is a historian. She is author of *Crown of Blood: The Deadly Inheritance of Lady Jane Grey* and *Elizabeth's Rival* (both Michael O'Mara, 2016 and 2017)

Read more of Nicola's experiences at [historyextra.com/bruges](http://historyextra.com/bruges)

**Next month:** Seán Williams visits the Swiss city of Bern

### Been there...

Have you visited Bruges? Do you have a top tip for readers? Contact us via Twitter or Facebook

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# HALF TERM

## *Heritage*

With half term round the corner, now is the best time to plan an adventure with all the historians in your life.



### National Waterfront Museum

Right on the dock in Swansea's marina, the National Waterfront Museum tells the human story of 300 years of Welsh industry and innovation, looking at the impact the Industrial Revolution had on the people and places of Wales and how the country exported its ideas – and its goods – to all corners of the world. Free entry.

03001 112 333 // [museum.wales/swansea](http://museum.wales/swansea)



### Brontë Parsonage Museum

Set in the picturesque village of Haworth against the stunning landscape of the Yorkshire moors, the Brontë Parsonage Museum houses the world's largest collection of Brontë furniture, clothes and personal possessions. The Museum is celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Emily Brontë in 2018 with an exciting programme of exhibitions, performances, talks and family activities.

01535 642 323 // [bronte.org.uk](http://bronte.org.uk)



### The Trench at Bodmin

From 18th June to 15th July, experience immersive theatre in The Trench at Bodmin, Cornwall. Telling the true and personal stories of local men who fought in the First World War, you'll follow in their footsteps, board a steam train and head off to the trenches and chaos of battle. Enlist today!

01726 879 500 // [thetrenchbodmin.co.uk](http://thetrenchbodmin.co.uk)



### Kelmarsh Hall

Explore Victorian working life at Kelmarsh, following the exciting restoration of the servants' quarters and old laundry. The new features offer a fantastic family day out, sounds and scents fill the rooms, allowing for a full sensory experience. New technologies, including a Kelmarsh App and augmented reality bring the rooms to life. The hall, gardens and tearooms are open too.

[enquiries@kelmarsh.com](mailto:enquiries@kelmarsh.com) // [kelmarsh.com](http://kelmarsh.com)



## Frogmore Paper Mill, Hemel Hempstead

'A real hidden gem'. This summer find a unique visitor experience at the world's oldest mechanised paper mill – still making hand and machine made paper today. Learn about the history of paper, make your own sheet, watch a hundred year old machine making paper and much more at the birthplace of paper's industrial revolution. Boat trips, mill tours, paper shop and cafe.

01442 234 600 // [thepapertrail.org.uk](http://thepapertrail.org.uk)



## Segedunum Roman Fort & Museum

Kids love it at Segedunum. Once home to 600 Roman soldiers at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall, families can let off steam exploring the fort ruins, climb a replica Hadrian's Wall, dress up as Romans in the galleries, and clamber on the new adventure play area. On Monday 28 May families can make Roman seed bombs to take home. Kids under 16 always go free.

01912 784 217 // [segedunumromanfort.org.uk](http://segedunumromanfort.org.uk)



## National Wool Museum

Set in the beautiful Teifi Valley, explore the mighty industry that produced clothing, shawls and blankets that were sold across Wales and the world in this gem of a Museum. Housed in the former Cambrian Mills, follow the story from fleece to fabric with our self-guided trails, where you can try your hand at some of the old techniques such as carding, spinning and sewing.

02920 573 070 // [museum.wales/wool](http://museum.wales/wool)



## Fishbourne Roman Palace

Fishbourne Roman Palace is a remarkable archaeological site. Explore this first century home and marvel at the largest collection of early mosaic floors in Britain. Make the most of your visit by joining one of our guided tours and enjoy a stroll around the Roman gardens. The site is open daily until 15th December with special events, talks and tours on offer throughout the year.

01243 785 859 // [sussexpast.co.uk/fishbourne](http://sussexpast.co.uk/fishbourne)

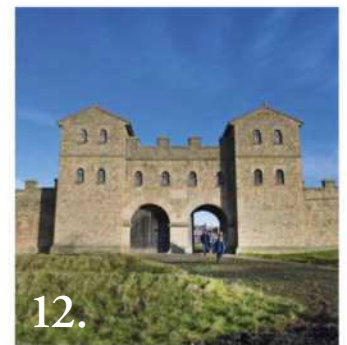
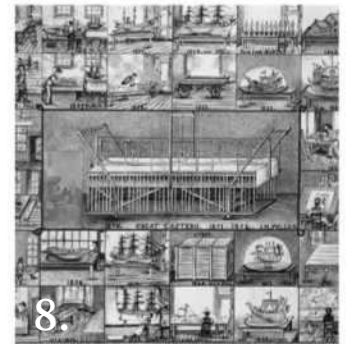


## New Lanark World Heritage Centre

'GAMEPLAN: Board Games Rediscovered' will celebrate the joy, excitement and occasional frustration of playing board games. This exhibition will include some of the most iconic, enthralling and visually striking games from the V&A's outstanding national collection of board games. There will be hands-on interactives and more than 100 objects, featuring games from around the world, exploring the important role of design. 'GAMEPLAN: Board Games Rediscovered' is a touring exhibition from the V&A Museum of Childhood. Open daily at New Lanark World Heritage Site from 20th July – 4th November 2018.

[newlanark.org/GAMEPLAN](http://newlanark.org/GAMEPLAN) // [trust@newlanark.org](mailto:trust@newlanark.org)

# Summer Heritage Collection



## 1. READING ABBEY QUARTER

Visit Reading Museum to discover the story of Reading Abbey and then explore the Abbey Ruins to uncover its 900 year history. Visit our website to see our exciting events programme.

[readingabbeyquarter.org.uk](http://readingabbeyquarter.org.uk) | 0118 937 3400

## 2. THE MERCHANTS HOUSE

Rare example of a seventeenth century merchant's house on Marlborough High Street. Open for guided tours from April to October.

[themerchantshouse.co.uk](http://themerchantshouse.co.uk) | 01672 511 491

## 3. DE HAVILLAND MUSEUM

The UK's oldest aviation museum, and dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the de Havilland Heritage. We are a "working" museum staffed by volunteers – always willing to answer your questions.

[dehavillandmuseum.co.uk](http://dehavillandmuseum.co.uk) | 01727 826 400

## 4. BAMBURGH CASTLE

A stunning coastal fortress at the heart of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Explore fourteen rooms, The Aviation Artfacts Museum, archaeology, cafeteria, grounds and battlements. Discover an amazing eclectic collection of 3500 items.

[bamburghcastle.com](http://bamburghcastle.com) | 01668 214 515

## 5. ANAESTHESIA HERITAGE CENTRE

A unique medical science museum devoted to the history of anaesthesia, resuscitation and pain relief. The current exhibition 'Brave Faces' shows how the innovations of Ivan Magill and Stanley Rowbotham revolutionised facial surgery.

[heritage@aagbi.org](mailto:heritage@aagbi.org) | 02076 311 650

## 6. BENTLEY PRIORY MUSEUM

Visit this half-term with all the family. Sit in a life-size replica Spitfire cockpit, discover the Museum with our explorer kit bags and take part in our family activity – Spitfire biscuit decorating.

[bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk](http://bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk) | 02089 505 526

## 7. FROGMORE MILL, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

Learn about the history of paper, make your own sheet, see a working 1902 paper machine and much more at the world's oldest mechanised paper mill.

[thepapertrail.org.uk](http://thepapertrail.org.uk) | 01442 234 600

## 8. WATT'S GALLERY

James Henry Patten: Inmate - Inventor - Genius. 19 June 2018 - 28 October 2018. This exhibition, the first ever gallery show devoted to Patten's work, highlights a frequently unseen part of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century art world.

[wattsgallery.org.uk](http://wattsgallery.org.uk) | 01483 810 235

## 9. WEDGWOOD MUSEUM

Visit the UNESCO recognised V&A collection this summer and discover over 250 years of history at this award-winning museum. With special children's events and exhibitions throughout the year.

[worldofwedgwood.com](http://worldofwedgwood.com)

## 10. HEAD OF STEAM MUSEUM

Venture into our original 1840's railway station. Journey through time, follow the history of the growth of the railways and admire our four historic locomotives including Stephenson's Locomotion No 1.

[head-of-steam.co.uk](http://head-of-steam.co.uk) | 01325 405 060

## 11. BUTSER ANCIENT FARM

A unique experimental archaeological site in the beautiful South Downs. Step inside ancient buildings from the Stone Age, Iron Age, Romans and Saxons, learn traditional skills with year round workshops and events.

[butserancientfarm.co.uk](http://butserancientfarm.co.uk) | 02392 598 838

## 12. ARBEIA, SOUTH SHIELDS ROMAN FORT

A World Heritage Site, Arbeia has the finest Roman full scale reconstructions in the UK with significant artefacts from Roman Britain including the Regina Tombstone.

[arbeiaromanfort.org.uk](http://arbeiaromanfort.org.uk) | 01912 771 410

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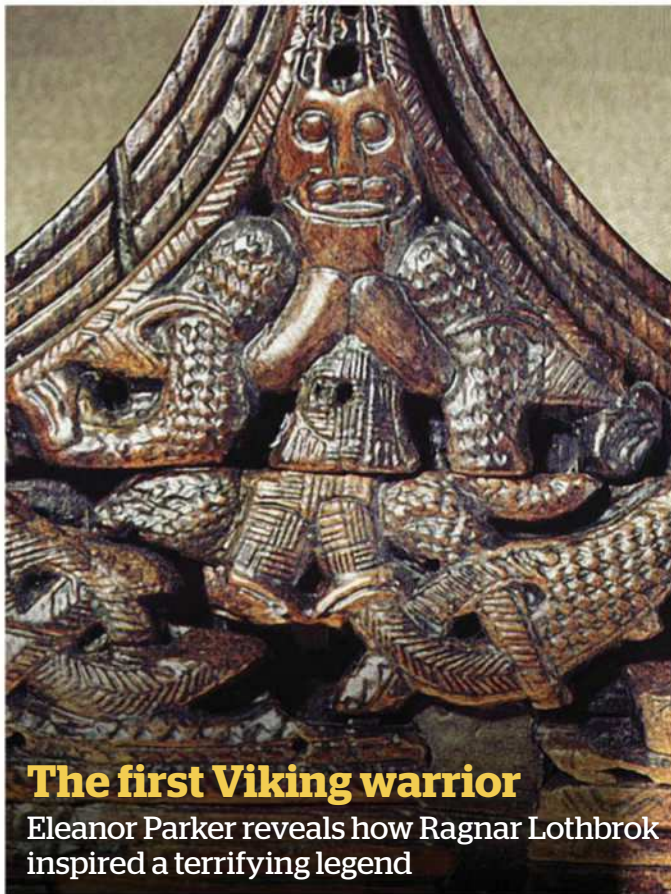
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94,583



July 2015–  
June 2016  
333,000

# NEXT MONTH

JULY ISSUE ON SALE 14 JUNE 2018



## The first Viking warrior

Eleanor Parker reveals how Ragnar Lothbrok inspired a terrifying legend

## NHS birthing pains

Mathew Thomson explores the difficulties facing the health service in its first years

## The Windrush

David Olusoga on how the 1948 immigrants were received in Britain



## Killer queen?

Tracy Borman asks whether there was a royal hand in the gunpowder plot



# MISCELLANY

Q&A

## QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE  
QUIZZES  
historyextra.com  
/quiz

1. Which European monarch paid a three-month visit to England in 1698 to learn about shipbuilding?

2. The first steam locomotive to haul passengers on a public railway line was built by George Stephenson in 1825. What was it called?

3. Originally called Criss Cross Words, which popular board game was devised in 1938 by New York architect Alfred Mosher Butts?

4. After being sworn in on 21 November 1922, Rebecca Latimer Felton (above) became the first woman to serve in the United States Senate. How long did she serve for?

5. Where would you find a depiction of a dwarf called Turolf?

6. The lump of stone below is all that remains of Fotheringhay Castle, which saw the birth of a king and the execution of a queen. Who were the two monarchs?



### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Peter the Great of Russia
2. Active (it was later renamed Locomotion)
3. Scrabble
4. 24 hours
5. On the Bayeux Tapestry
6. The king and queen were Richard III and Mary, Queen of Scots

### GOT A QUESTION?

Write to *BBC History Magazine*, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN. Email: [historymagazine@historyextra.com](mailto:historymagazine@historyextra.com) or submit via our website: [historyextra.com](http://historyextra.com)

## Q When and where did the art of bell ringing begin?

Trevor Cowburn, by email

Ever since the early Middle Ages, bells have been used in Christian churches to call people to worship, and sometimes also to ring out signals and warnings. However, the art of 'musical' bell ringing did not really emerge until the 16th or 17th century.

The carillon, an array of bells housed in the tower of a church or other building, originated in 16th-century Flanders, Belgium. Refined over the next decades, it is basically a huge musical instrument, with each bell played using levers and pedals.

The change ringing we associate with English churches is altogether different, and was made possible in the post-Reformation period by new bell mechanisms – particularly wheels, stays and sliders, which gave ringers much more control. Sets of handbells, each tuned to a separate note, also came into vogue in the 17th and 18th centuries,

and were often adapted by church ringers for practice.

By the late 17th century, church bell ringing was becoming an increasingly secular activity, pursued as much for recreation as for religious services. The mathematical disciplines of change ringing might even be said to have been part of the coming scientific and industrial revolutions, though only up to a point – by the 1700s, accounts started to emerge of rowdy and drunken behaviour among bell ringers in many communities.

Eugene Byrne is an author and journalist, specialising in history



ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

## SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's small custard tarts happily feasted on by King Henry VIII

### Maids of honour

Various legends surround the origins of these delicious little custard tarts, all of which involve one of history's biggest food lovers: Henry VIII.

According to one story, Henry discovered the recipe locked away in a chest at Hampton Court Palace, and named the tarts after his mistress Anne Boleyn, who was then a maid of his wife, Catherine of Aragon.

Another suggests that he found Anne and *her* ladies-in-waiting eating the tarts, and confiscated the recipe when he discovered how delicious they were.

Records from 1526 show that Henry loved custard tarts so much that he would even devour them on designated fast days, as part of feasts including lobster, porpoise and seal.

#### INGREDIENTS

375g puff pastry  
50g butter, softened  
50g caster sugar  
1 egg, beaten  
1 tbsp plain flour  
50g ground almonds  
½ tsp grated nutmeg  
2 lemons, zest only  
100g curd cheese

#### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4).

Roll the pastry out thinly, then stamp out a dozen 9cm rounds using a biscuit cutter. Place in a non-stick bun tray. Keep this in the fridge while you make the filling.

To make the filling, cream together the butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Beat in the egg, flour, ground almonds, nutmeg (or ground mace) and lemon zest. Stir in the curd cheese, being careful not to overwork the mixture, as it can split.

Spoon the mixture into the pastry cases and bake in the oven for 25 minutes, or until risen and lightly browned on top.

Transfer to a wire rack and leave to cool completely before serving.

#### VERDICT

"A light and creamy Tudor treat"

**Difficulty:** 2/10

**Time:** 45 mins

*Recipe sourced from [bbc.com/food](http://bbc.com/food)*



Female welders in 1943. War work was one way for women to support themselves financially while their husbands were away fighting

## Q How did women survive financially when their husbands were away in the world wars?

Keith Camish, by email

**A** During both wars, the British government established a system of universal allowances to support the dependants of fighting men. The alleviation of concerns for loved ones back home boosted recruitment efforts and maintained morale.

But despite widespread agitation for a more generous provision, the allowances were minimal. In both wars, they only maintained women at a near-subsistence level. And these allowances were not a right. In the First World War they could be withdrawn from wives for "immoral" conduct such as drunkenness, child neglect or infidelity.

Evidence of the effectiveness of this system is mixed. Some working-class women benefited from a regular, weekly income, whereas others

complained of great hardship.

Many were obliged to turn to paid work to augment household incomes. In the Second World War, demand for workers in munitions and essential industries accelerated this trend, supported by the greater availability of part-time jobs, nurseries and canteens.

The mobilisation of women's labour in 1941 transformed the makeup of the workforce. By 1943, 43 per cent of the estimated 7,750,000 working women were married – up from 16 per cent in 1931.

But not all women were compelled to work – a third had children under 14, and would therefore have been exempt from conscription.

**Linda Maynard** is a historian at Birkbeck, University of London

# PRIZE CROSSWORD



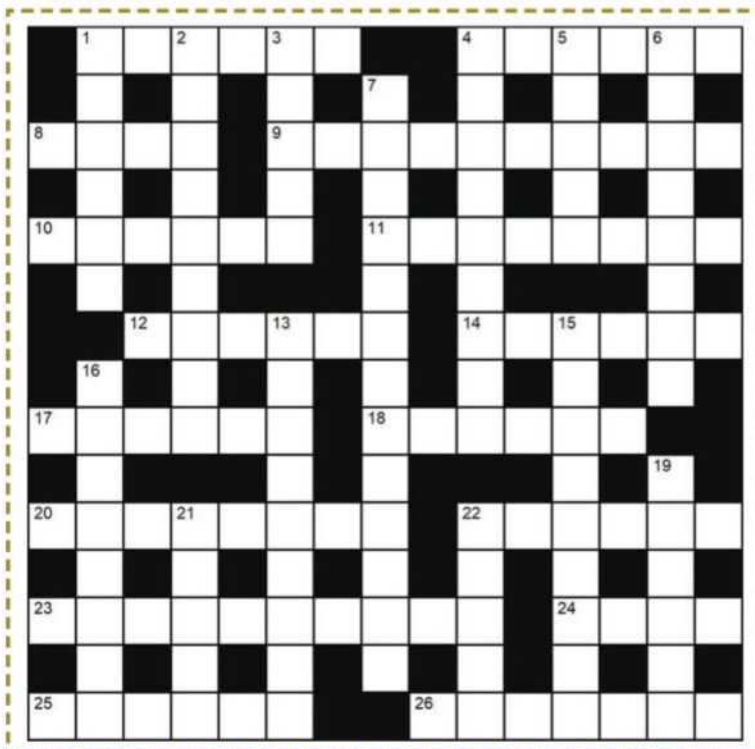
Which celebrated US aviator flew this plane? (see 7 down)

## Across

- 1 Archaeological burial mounds or barrows (6)
- 4 A Lancashire borough, famously associated with the witch trials of 1612 (6)
- 8 Robert \_\_\_\_, Welsh manufacturer turned social reformer, and a founder of 'utopian socialism' and the co-operative movement in the 19th century (4)
- 9 William Augustus, Duke of \_\_\_\_, notorious for his harsh suppression of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-46 (10)
- 10 \_\_\_\_ of Hanover, a granddaughter of James VI and I, and mother of George I (6)
- 11 Greek commander of the Spartan fleet that defeated the Athenians in 405 BC, ending the Peloponnesian War (8)
- 12 Scottish town traditionally linked to runaway weddings (6)
- 14 The earliest-known name for Great Britain (6)
- 17 Site of a battle in 479 BC that ended the Persian invasion of Greece (6)
- 18 Heraldic silvery white (6)
- 20 Northumbrian birthplace of the Victorian heroine Grace Darling, rescuer of shipwrecked sailors (8)
- 22 Language of early Egyptian Christians (6)
- 23 German diplomat who played a key role in the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of 1939 (10)
- 24 A letter of the earliest Germanic alphabet (4)
- 25 19th/20th-century British archaeologist and Egyptologist, Sir Flinders \_\_\_\_ (6)
- 26 The Peace of \_\_\_\_, a series of treaties in 1713-14 that ended the War of the Spanish Succession (7)

## Down

- 1 Village, south of York, the site of a battle in 1461 that secured the throne for Edward IV (6)
- 2 Disputes over this historical region of north-eastern China led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 (9)
- 3 Xanthos and Patara were



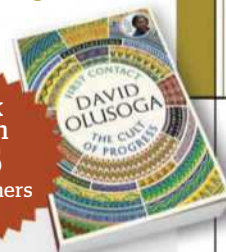
- principal cities of this ancient Anatolian region (5)
- 4 Historically, a group of sailors empowered to forcibly recruit men into the navy (5,4)
- 5 Australian artist, best known for his series of Ned Kelly paintings (5)
- 6 First name of the great 18th-century landscape gardener 'Capability' Brown (8)
- 7 Celebrated American aviator who became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic in May 1932 (6,7)
- 13 Niccolò Machiavelli's most influential work, a 16th-century political treatise on the acquisition of power and state creation (3,6)
- 15 French imperial dynasty, ended by the 1870 battle of Sedan (9)

- 16 It was invented in the 18th century by Swedish physicist Alfred Nobel (8)
- 19 Muhammad Ali \_\_\_\_, the founder of Pakistan (6)
- 21 Founder and first emperor (1526-30) of northern India's Mughal dynasty (5)
- 22 Hugh \_\_\_\_, 10th-century French king, founder of a major dynasty (5)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

## CROSSWORD PRIZE

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by David Olusoga

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**HOW TO ENTER** Open to residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands). Post entries to **BBC History Magazine, June 2018 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to **june2018@historycomps.co.uk** by 5pm on 13 June 2018. Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the August 2018 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at [immediatemediacompany.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/](http://immediatemediacompany.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/). Immediate Media Company Limited (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) would love to send you newsletters, together with special offers and other promotions. If you would not like to receive these, please write 'NO INFO' on your entry. Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Worldwide (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here ☐ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Worldwide by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Worldwide privacy policy: [bbcworldwide.com/privacy](http://bbcworldwide.com/privacy)

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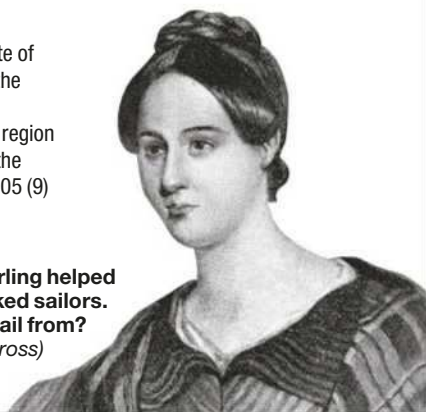
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Grace Darling helped rescue shipwrecked sailors. But where did she hail from? (see 20 across)



"The songs he wrote were iconic and will live forever, just like the Beatles'. He was one of the greatest live performers – the sparks seemed to fly out of him"

*Singer and broadcaster  
Aled Jones chooses*

# Freddie Mercury

1946-91

Freddie Mercury was the lead singer of rock band Queen who sold more than 150 million records worldwide. Born in Zanzibar to Parsi parents, he moved to London in his teens and studied art before co-founding Queen. The group scored a string of hits including *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *We Will Rock You* and *Radio Ga Ga*, and stole the show at the Live Aid concert at Wembley Stadium. He died at 45 from an Aids-related illness.

### When did you first hear about Freddie Mercury?

As a young chorister at Bangor Cathedral, Wales. The older choristers were always going on about Queen's music. I'd never heard of them and thought, 'What, Her Majesty the Queen?' Then I got to hear some of their albums, and as soon as I had some money went to WHSmith, a five-minute walk from the cathedral, and bought my very first record, *Queen's Greatest Hits*. I learnt every word to every song and have been a fan of Freddie's ever since.

### What kind of person was he?

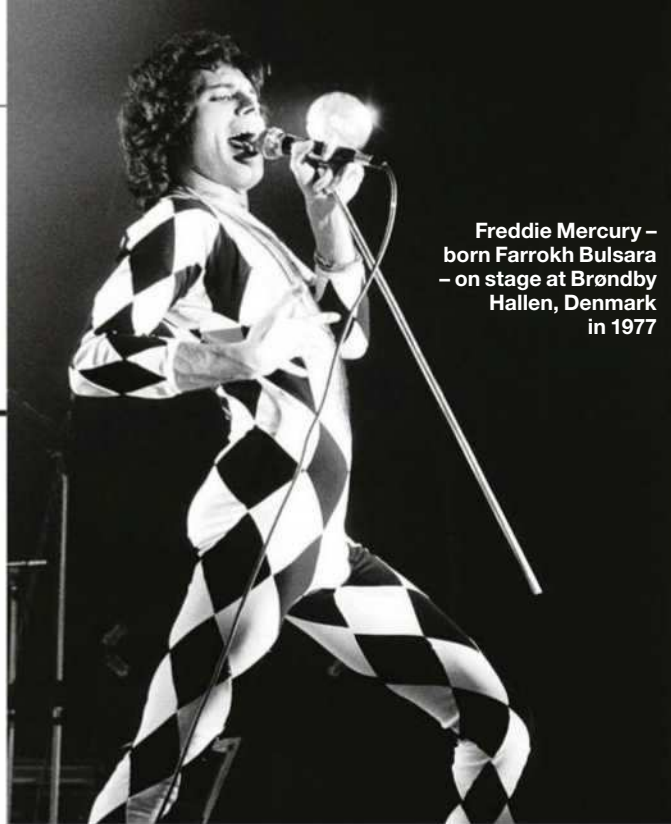
I've read a lot of books about Queen over the years and, by the sound of it, Freddie certainly lived life to the full. He also put heart and soul into a piece of music and could really belt out a tune. But there was also a caring side to the man privately that we don't hear so much about – he was obviously a man with a massive heart.

### What made Freddie a hero?

Firstly, the songs that he wrote with Queen, such as the nearly six-minute epic *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *We Are the Champions*. These are iconic and will live forever, just like the Beatles' songs. Secondly, he was one of the greatest live performers, and could wow an audience, no matter how big the venue – the sparks seemed to fly out of him. Thirdly, his vocal range and power – he could sing rock songs and ballads but also hold his own alongside an opera star like Montserrat Caballé, as he did on the song *Barcelona*.

### What was his finest hour?

There were so many. *Bohemian Rhapsody*, for a start. When I heard that song for the first time, I couldn't quite believe it. It was so ahead of its time, they initially couldn't do it live in one take on stage. His



Freddie Mercury – born Farrokh Bulsara – on stage at Brøndby Hallen, Denmark in 1977

show-stopping performance at Live Aid in 1985 must rank as another high spot. I also admire the bravery and dignity with which he confronted Aids – he co-wrote one of Queen's most poignant songs, *The Show Must Go On*, as he was dying.

### Is there anything you don't particularly admire about him?

Not really – all the rumours we hear about his partying make him just more of a legend in my mind, although I admire him first and foremost for his musicianship and voice.

### Can you see any parallels between his life and your own?

I'd like to think I'm a good performer, but I'm definitely not in the same league as him – he was very much Premier League, I'm more Championship! He also had a more powerful voice than me. However, I would like to think we both touched people's souls through our music.

### Did he influence you as a vocalist?

Not really, but performance-wise definitely because he gave everything on stage, and I hope I do the same.

### If you could have met Freddie Mercury, what would you have asked him?

I've been lucky to get to know Brian May [Queen's guitarist] and his wife Anita Dobson, but one of my greatest regrets is that I never got to perform with Freddie. If I had met him, I'd have asked him what went through his mind when he was on stage, and what it was like to perform at Live Aid. **II**

*Aled Jones was talking to York Membery*

Aled Jones is a singer and radio and television presenter. He shot to fame as a boy in the 1980s with his top 5 hit *Walking in the Air*. His latest album, *One Voice: Believe*, is out now ([officialaledjones.com](http://officialaledjones.com))

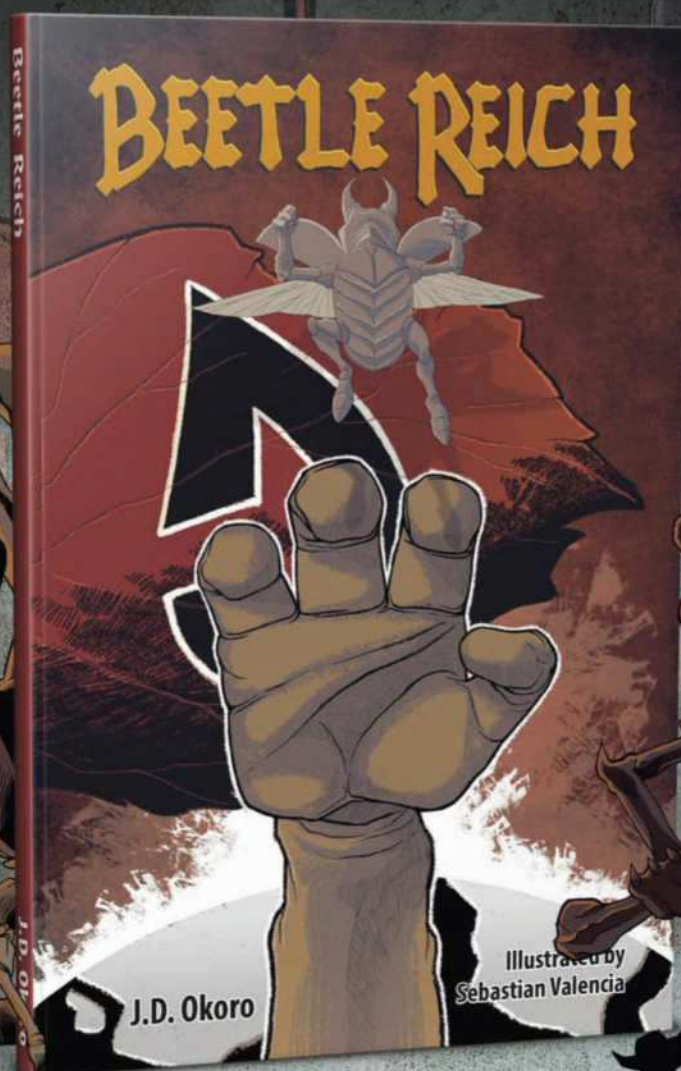
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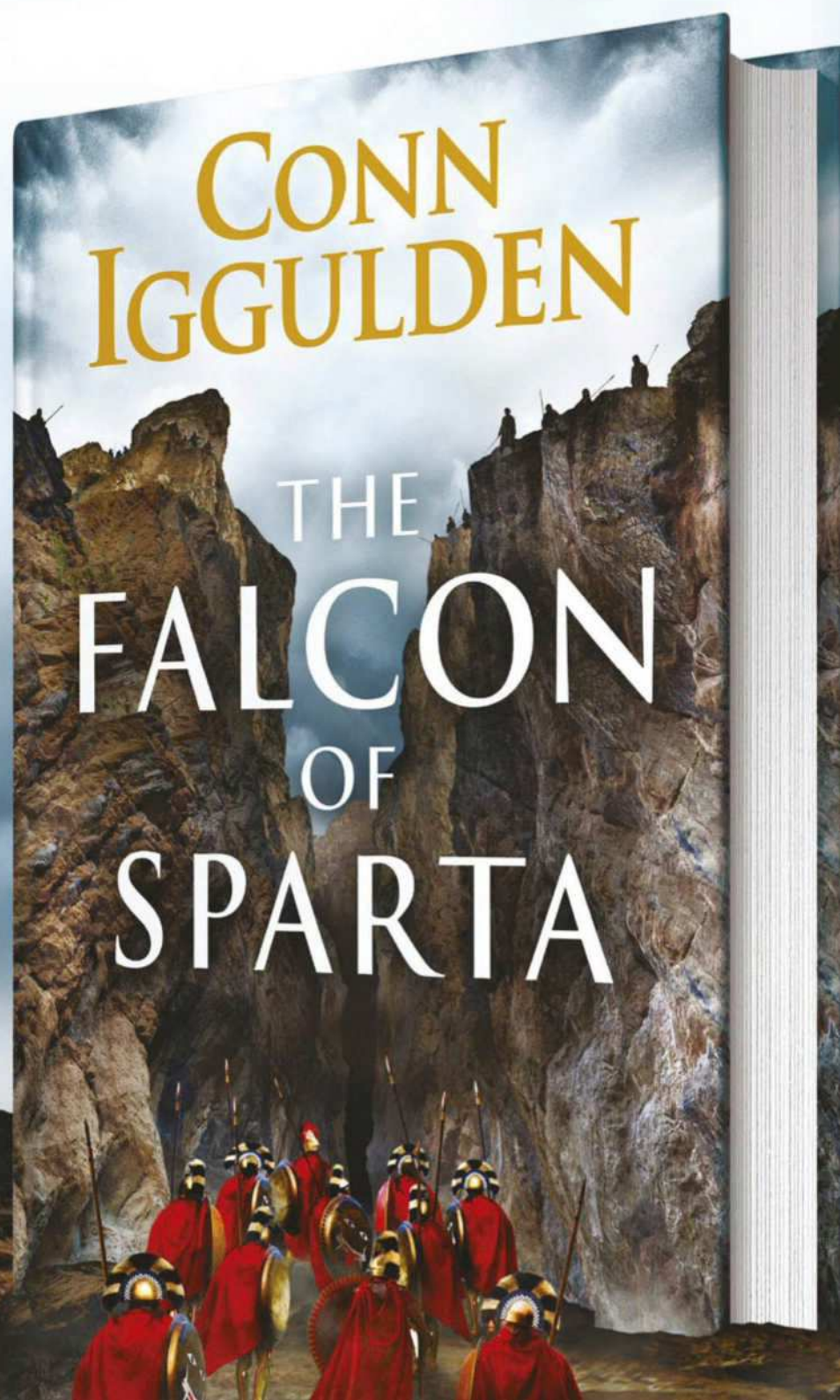
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